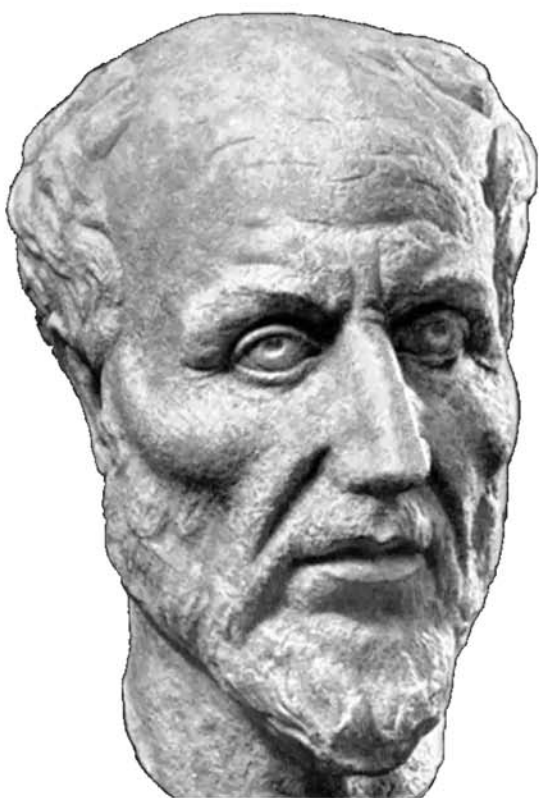


AGAINST THE GNOSTICS



PLOTINUS

BERSERKER

BOOKS



NINTH TRACTATE

AGAINST THOSE THAT AFFIRM THE CREATOR OF THE KOS-
MOS AND THE KOSMOS ITSELF TO BE EVIL: [GENERALLY
QUOTED AS "AGAINST THE GNOSTICS"]

1. We have seen elsewhere that the Good, the Principle, is simplex, and, correspondingly, primal- for the secondary can never be simplex- that it contains nothing: that it is an integral Unity.

Now the same Nature belongs to the Principle we know as The One just as the goodness of The Good is essential and not the outgrowth of some prior substance so the Unity of The One is its essential.

Therefore:

When we speak of The One and when we speak of The Good we must recognize an Identical Nature; we must affirm that they are the same- not,

it is true, as venturing any predication with regard to that [unknowable] Hypostasis but simply as indicating it to ourselves in the best terms we find.

Even in calling it "The First" we mean no more than to express that it is the most absolutely simplex: it is the Self-Sufficing only in the sense that it is not of that compound nature which would make it dependent upon any constituent; it is "the Self-Contained" because everything contained in something alien must also exist by that alien.

Deriving, then, from nothing alien, entering into nothing alien, in no way a made-up thing, there can be nothing above it.

We need not, then, go seeking any other Principles; this - the One and the Good- is our First; next to it follows the Intellectual Principle, the Primal Thinker; and upon this follows Soul. Such is the order in nature. The Intellectual Realm allows no more than these and no fewer.

Those who hold to fewer Principles must hold the identity of either Intellectual-Principle and Soul or of Intellectual-Principle and The First; but we have abundantly shown that these are distinct.

It remains for us to consider whether there are more than these Three.

Now what other [Divine] Kinds could there be? No Principles of the universe could be found at once simpler and more transcendent than this whose existence we have affirmed and described.

They will scarcely urge upon us the doubling of the Principle in Act by a Principle in Potentiality. It is absurd to seek such a plurality by distinguishing between potentiality and actuality in the case of immaterial beings whose existence is in Act- even in lower forms no such division can be made and we cannot conceive a duality in the Intellectual-Principle, one phase in some vague calm, another all astir. Under what form can we think of repose in the Intellectual Principle as contrasted with its movement or utterance? What would the quiescence of the one phase be as against the energy of the others?

No: the Intellectual-Principle is continuously itself, unchangeably constituted in stable Act. With movement- towards it or within it- we are in the realm of the Soul's operation: such act is a Reason-Principle emanating from it and entering into Soul, thus made an Intellectual Soul, but in no sense creating an intermediate Principle to stand between the two.

Nor are we warranted in affirming a plurality of Intellectual Principles on the ground that there is one that knows and thinks and another knowing that it knows and thinks. For whatever distinction be possible in the Divine between its Intellectual Act and its Consciousness of that Act, still

all must be one projection not unaware of its own operation: it would be absurd to imagine any such unconsciousness in the Authentic Intelligence; the knowing principle must be one and the selfsame with that which knows of the knowing.

The contrary supposition would give us two beings, one that merely knows, and another separate being that knows of the act of knowing.

If we are answered that the distinction is merely a process of our thought, then, at once, the theory of a plurality in the Divine Hypostasis is abandoned: further, the question is opened whether our thought can entertain a knowing principle so narrowed to its knowing as not to know that it knows- a limitation which would be charged as imbecility even in ourselves, who if but of very ordinary moral force are always master of our emotions and mental processes.

No: The Divine Mind in its mentation thinks itself; the object of the thought is nothing external: Thinker and Thought are one; therefore in its thinking and knowing it possesses itself, observes itself and sees itself not as something unconscious but as knowing: in this Primal Knowing it must include, as one and the same Act, the knowledge of the knowing; and even the logical distinction mentioned above cannot be made in the case of the Divine; the very eternity of its self-thinking precludes any such separation between that intellectual act and the consciousness of the act.

The absurdity becomes still more blatant if we introduce yet a further distinction- after that which affirms the knowledge of the knowing, a third distinction affirming the knowing of the knowledge of the knowing: yet there is no reason against carrying on the division for ever and ever.

To increase the Primals by making the Supreme Mind engender the Reason-Principle, and this again engender in the Soul a distinct power to act as mediator between Soul and the Supreme Mind, this is to deny intellection to the Soul, which would no longer derive its Reason from the Intellectual-Principle but from an intermediate: the Soul then would possess not the Reason-Principle but an image of it: the Soul could not know the Intellectual-Principle; it could have no intellection.

2. Therefore we must affirm no more than these three Primals: we are not to introduce superfluous distinctions which their nature rejects. We are to proclaim one Intellectual-Principle unchangeably the same, in no way subject to decline, acting in imitation, as true as its nature allows, of the Father.

And as to our own Soul we are to hold that it stands, in part, always in

the presence of The Divine Beings, while in part it is concerned with the things of this sphere and in part occupies a middle ground. It is one nature in graded powers; and sometimes the Soul in its entirety is borne along by the loftiest in itself and in the Authentic Existent; sometimes, the less noble part is dragged down and drags the mid-soul with it, though the law is that the Soul may never succumb entire.

The Soul's disaster falls upon it when it ceases to dwell in the perfect Beauty- the appropriate dwelling-place of that Soul which is no part and of which we too are no part- thence to pour forth into the frame of the All whatsoever the All can hold of good and beauty. There that Soul rests, free from all solicitude, not ruling by plan or policy, not redressing, but establishing order by the marvellous efficacy of its contemplation of the things above it.

For the measure of its absorption in that vision is the measure of its grace and power, and what it draws from this contemplation it communicates to the lower sphere, illuminated and illuminating always.

3. Ever illuminated, receiving light unailing, the All-Soul imparts it to the entire series of later Being which by this light is sustained and fostered and endowed with the fullest measure of life that each can absorb. It may be compared with a central fire warming every receptive body within range.

Our fire, however, is a thing of limited scope: given powers that have no limitation and are never cut off from the Authentic Existences, how imagine anything existing and yet failing to receive from them?

It is of the essence of things that each gives of its being to another: without this communication, The Good would not be Good, nor the Intellectual-Principle an Intellectual Principle, nor would Soul itself be what it is: the law is, "some life after the Primal Life, a second where there is a first; all linked in one unbroken chain; all eternal; divergent types being engendered only in the sense of being secondary."

In other words, things commonly described as generated have never known a beginning: all has been and will be. Nor can anything disappear unless where a later form is possible: without such a future there can be no dissolution.

If we are told that there is always Matter as a possible term, we ask why then should not Matter itself come to nothingness. If we are told it may, then we ask why it should ever have been generated. If the answer comes that it had its necessary place as the ultimate of the series, we return that the necessity still holds.

With Matter left aside as wholly isolated, the Divine Beings are not everywhere but in some bounded place, walled off, so to speak; if that is not possible, Matter itself must receive the Divine light [and so cannot be annihilated].

4. To those who assert that creation is the work of the Soul after the falling of its wings, we answer that no such disgrace could overtake the Soul of the All. If they tell us of its falling, they must tell us also what caused the fall. And when did it take place? If from eternity, then the Soul must be essentially a fallen thing: if at some one moment, why not before that?

We assert its creative act to be a proof not of decline but rather of its steadfast hold. Its decline could consist only in its forgetting the Divine: but if it forgot, how could it create? Whence does it create but from the things it knew in the Divine? If it creates from the memory of that vision, it never fell. Even supposing it to be in some dim intermediate state, it need not be supposed more likely to decline: any inclination would be towards its Prior, in an effort to the clearer vision. If any memory at all remained, what other desire could it have than to retrace the way?

What could it have been planning to gain by world-creating? Glory? That would be absurd- a motive borrowed from the sculptors of our earth.

Finally, if the Soul created by policy and not by sheer need of its nature, by being characteristically the creative power- how explain the making of this universe?

And when will it destroy the work? If it repents of its work, what is it waiting for? If it has not yet repented, then it will never repent: it must be already accustomed to the world, must be growing more tender towards it with the passing of time.

Can it be waiting for certain souls still here? Long since would these have ceased returning for such re-birth, having known in former life the evils of this sphere; long since would they have foreborne to come.

Nor may we grant that this world is of unhappy origin because there are many jarring things in it. Such a judgement would rate it too high, treating it as the same with the Intelligible Realm and not merely its reflection.

And yet- what reflection of that world could be conceived more beautiful than this of ours? What fire could be a nobler reflection of the fire there than the fire we know here? Or what other earth than this could have been modelled after that earth? And what globe more minutely perfect than this, or more admirably ordered in its course could have been conceived in the image of the self-centred circling of the World of Intelligibles? And for a

sun figuring the Divine sphere, if it is to be more splendid than the sun visible to us, what a sun it must be.

5. Still more unreasonably:

There are men, bound to human bodies and subject to desire, grief, anger, who think so generously of their own faculty that they declare themselves in contact with the Intelligible World, but deny that the sun possesses a similar faculty less subject to influence, to disorder, to change; they deny that it is any wiser than we, the late born, hindered by so many cheats on the way towards truth.

Their own soul, the soul of the least of mankind, they declare deathless, divine; but the entire heavens and the stars within the heavens have had no communion with the Immortal Principle, though these are far purer and lovelier than their own souls- yet they are not blind to the order, the shape-ly pattern, the discipline prevailing in the heavens, since they are the loudest in complaint of the disorder that troubles our earth. We are to imagine the deathless Soul choosing of design the less worthy place, and preferring to abandon the nobler to the Soul that is to die.

Equally unreasonable is their introduction of that other Soul which they piece together from the elements.

How could any form or degree of life come about by a blend of the elements? Their conjunction could produce only a warm or cold or an intermediate substance, something dry or wet or intermediate.

Besides, how could such a soul be a bond holding the four elements together when it is a later thing and rises from them? And this element- soul is described as possessing consciousness and will and the rest- what can we think?

Furthermore, these teachers, in their contempt for this creation and this earth, proclaim that another earth has been made for them into which they are to enter when they depart. Now this new earth is the Reason-Form [the Logos] of our world. Why should they desire to live in the archetype of a world abhorrent to them?

Then again, what is the origin of that pattern world? It would appear, from the theory, that the Maker had already declined towards the things of this sphere before that pattern came into being.

Now let us suppose the Maker craving to construct such an Intermediate World- though what motive could He have?- in addition to the Intellectual world which He eternally possesses. If He made the mid-world first, what end was it to serve?

To be a dwelling-place for Souls?

How then did they ever fall from it? It exists in vain.

If He made it later than this world- abstracting the formal-idea of this world and leaving the Matter out- the Souls that have come to know that intermediate sphere would have experienced enough to keep them from entering this. If the meaning is simply that Souls exhibit the Ideal-Form of the Universe, what is there distinctive in the teaching?

6. And, what are we to think of the new forms of being they introduce- their "Exiles" and "Impressions" and "Repentings"?

If all comes to states of the Soul- "Repentance" when it has undergone a change of purpose; "Impressions" when it contemplates not the Authentic Existences but their simulacra- there is nothing here but a jargon invented to make a case for their school: all this terminology is piled up only to conceal their debt to the ancient Greek philosophy which taught, clearly and without bombast, the ascent from the cave and the gradual advance of souls to a truer and truer vision.

For, in sum, a part of their doctrine comes from Plato; all the novelties through which they seek to establish a philosophy of their own have been picked up outside of the truth.

From Plato come their punishments, their rivers of the underworld and the changing from body to body; as for the plurality they assert in the Intellectual Realm- the Authentic Existent, the Intellectual-Principle, the Second Creator and the Soul- all this is taken over from the *Timaeus*, where we read:

"As many Ideal-Forms as the Divine Mind beheld dwelling within the Veritably Living Being, so many the Maker resolved should be contained in this All."

Misunderstanding their text, they conceived one Mind passively including within itself all that has being, another mind, a distinct existence, having vision, and a third planning the Universe- though often they substitute Soul for this planning Mind as the creating Principle - and they think that this third being is the Creator according to Plato.

They are in fact quite outside of the truth in their identification of the Creator.

In every way they misrepresent Plato's theory as to the method of creation as in many other respects they dishonour his teaching: they, we are to understand, have penetrated the Intellectual Nature, while Plato and all those other illustrious teachers have failed.

They hope to get the credit of minute and exact identification by setting up a plurality of intellectual Essences; but in reality this multiplication lowers the Intellectual Nature to the level of the Sense-Kind: their true course is to seek to reduce number to the least possible in the Supreme, simply referring all things to the Second Hypostasis- which is all that exists as it is Primal Intellect and Reality and is the only thing that is good except only for the first Nature- and to recognize Soul as the third Principle, accounting for the difference among souls merely by diversity of experience and character. Instead of insulting those venerable teachers they should receive their doctrine with the respect due to the older thought and honour all that noble system- an immortal soul, an Intellectual and Intelligible Realm, the Supreme God, the Soul's need of emancipation from all intercourse with the body, the fact of separation from it, the escape from the world of process to the world of essential-being. These doctrines, all emphatically asserted by Plato, they do well to adopt: where they differ, they are at full liberty to speak their minds, but not to procure assent for their own theories by flaying and flouting the Greeks: where they have a divergent theory to maintain they must establish it by its own merits, declaring their own opinions with courtesy and with philosophical method and stating the controverted opinion fairly; they must point their minds towards the truth and not hunt fame by insult, reviling and seeking in their own persons to replace men honoured by the fine intelligences of ages past.

As a matter of fact the ancient doctrine of the Divine Essences was far the sounder and more instructed, and must be accepted by all not caught in the delusions that beset humanity: it is easy also to identify what has been conveyed in these later times from the ancients with incongruous novelties- how for example, where they must set up a contradictory doctrine, they introduce a medley of generation and destruction, how they cavil at the Universe, how they make the Soul blameable for the association with body, how they revile the Administrator of this All, how they ascribe to the Creator, identified with the Soul, the character and experiences appropriate to partial beings.

7. That this world has neither beginning nor end but exists for ever as long as the Supreme stands is certainly no novel teaching. And before this school rose it had been urged that commerce with the body is no gain to a Soul.

But to treat the human Soul as a fair presentment of the Soul of the Universe is like picking out potters and blacksmiths and making them war-

rant for discrediting an entire well-ordered city.

We must recognize how different is the governance exercised by the All-Soul; the relation is not the same: it is not in fetters. Among the very great number of differences it should not have been overlooked that the We [the human Soul] lies under fetter; and this in a second limitation, for the Body-Kind, already fettered within the All-Soul, imprisons all that it grasps.

But the Soul of the Universe cannot be in bond to what itself has bound: it is sovereign and therefore immune of the lower things, over which we on the contrary are not masters. That in it which is directed to the Divine and Transcendent is ever unmingled, knows no encumbering; that in it which imparts life to the body admits nothing bodily to itself. It is the general fact that an inset [as the Body], necessarily shares the conditions of its containing principle [as the Soul], and does not communicate its own conditions where that principle has an independent life: thus a graft will die if the stock dies, but the stock will live on by its proper life though the graft wither. The fire within your own self may be quenched, but the thing, fire, will exist still; and if fire itself were annihilated that would make no difference to the Soul, the Soul in the Supreme, but only to the plan of the material world; and if the other elements sufficed to maintain a Kosmos, the Soul in the Supreme would be unconcerned.

The constitution of the All is very different from that of the single, separate forms of life: there, the established rule commanding to permanence is sovereign; here things are like deserters kept to their own place and duty by a double bond; there is no outlet from the All, and therefore no need of restraining or of driving errants back to bounds: all remains where from the beginning the Soul's nature appointed.

The natural movement within the plan will be injurious to anything whose natural tendency it opposes: one group will sweep bravely onward with the great total to which it is adapted; the others, not able to comply with the larger order, are destroyed. A great choral is moving to its concerted plan; midway in the march, a tortoise is intercepted; unable to get away from the choral line it is trampled under foot; but if it could only range itself within the greater movement it too would suffer nothing.

8. To ask why the Soul has created the Kosmos, is to ask why there is a Soul and why a Creator creates. The question, also, implies a beginning in the eternal and, further, represents creation as the act of a changeful Being who turns from this to that.

Those that so think must be instructed- if they would but bear with cor-

rection- in the nature of the Supernals, and brought to desist from that blasphemy of majestic powers which comes so easily to them, where all should be reverent scruple.

Even in the administration of the Universe there is no ground for such attack, for it affords manifest proof of the greatness of the Intellectual Kind.

This All that has emerged into life is no amorphous structure - like those lesser forms within it which are born night and day out of the lavishness of its vitality- the Universe is a life organized, effective, complex, all-comprehensive, displaying an unfathomable wisdom. How, then, can anyone deny that it is a clear image, beautifully formed, of the Intellectual Divinities? No doubt it is copy, not original; but that is its very nature; it cannot be at once symbol and reality. But to say that it is an inadequate copy is false; nothing has been left out which a beautiful representation within the physical order could include.

Such a reproduction there must necessarily be- though not by deliberation and contrivance- for the Intellectual could not be the last of things, but must have a double Act, one within itself and one outgoing; there must, then, be something later than the Divine; for only the thing with which all power ends fails to pass downwards something of itself. In the Supreme there flourishes a marvellous vigour, and therefore it produces.

Since there is no Universe nobler than this, is it not clear what this must be? A representation carrying down the features of the Intellectual Realm is necessary; there is no other Kosmos than this; therefore this is such a representation.

This earth of ours is full of varied life-forms and of immortal beings; to the very heavens it is crowded. And the stars, those of the upper and the under spheres, moving in their ordered path, fellow-travellers with the universe, how can they be less than gods? Surely they must be morally good: what could prevent them? All that occasions vice here below is unknown there evil of body, perturbed and perturbing.

Knowledge, too; in their unbroken peace, what hinders them from the intellectual grasp of the God-Head and the Intellectual Gods? What can be imagined to give us a wisdom higher than belongs to the Supernals? Could anyone, not fallen to utter folly, bear with such an idea?

Admitting that human Souls have descended under constraint of the All-Soul, are we to think the constrained the nobler? Among Souls, what commands must be higher than what obeys. And if the coming was uncon-

strained, why find fault with a world you have chosen and can quit if you dislike it?

And further, if the order of this Universe is such that we are able, within it, to practise wisdom and to live our earthly course by the Supernal, does not that prove it a dependency of the Divine?

9. Wealth and poverty, and all inequalities of that order, are made ground of complaint. But this is to ignore that the Sage demands no equality in such matters: he cannot think that to own many things is to be richer or that the powerful have the better of the simple; he leaves all such preoccupations to another kind of man. He has learned that life on earth has two distinct forms, the way of the Sage and the way of the mass, the Sage intent upon the sublimest, upon the realm above, while those of the more strictly human type fall, again, under two classes, the one reminiscent of virtue and therefore not without touch with good, the other mere populace, serving to provide necessities to the better sort.

But what of murder? What of the feebleness that brings men under slavery to the passions?

Is it any wonder that there should be failing and error, not in the highest, the intellectual, Principle but in Souls that are like undeveloped children? And is not life justified even so if it is a training ground with its victors and its vanquished?

You are wronged; need that trouble an immortal? You are put to death; you have attained your desire. And from the moment your citizenship of the world becomes irksome you are not bound to it.

Our adversaries do not deny that even here there is a system of law and penalty: and surely we cannot in justice blame a dominion which awards to every one his due, where virtue has its honour, and vice comes to its fitting shame, in which there are not merely representations of the gods, but the gods themselves, watchers from above, and- as we read- easily rebutting human reproaches, since they lead all things in order from a beginning to an end, allotting to each human being, as life follows life, a fortune shaped to all that has preceded- the destiny which, to those that do not penetrate it, becomes the matter of boorish insolence upon things divine.

A man's one task is to strive towards making himself perfect - though not in the idea- really fatal to perfection- that to be perfect is possible to himself alone.

We must recognize that other men have attained the heights of goodness; we must admit the goodness of the celestial spirits, and above all of

the gods- those whose presence is here but their contemplation in the Supreme, and loftiest of them, the lord of this All, the most blessed Soul. Rising still higher, we hymn the divinities of the Intellectual Sphere, and, above all these, the mighty King of that dominion, whose majesty is made patent in the very multitude of the gods.

It is not by crushing the divine unto a unity but by displaying its exuberance- as the Supreme himself has displayed it- that we show knowledge of the might of God, who, abidingly what He is, yet creates that multitude, all dependent on Him, existing by Him and from Him.

This Universe, too, exists by Him and looks to Him- the Universe as a whole and every God within it- and tells of Him to men, all alike revealing the plan and will of the Supreme.

These, in the nature of things, cannot be what He is, but that does not justify you in contempt of them, in pushing yourself forward as not inferior to them.

The more perfect the man, the more compliant he is, even towards his fellows; we must temper our importance, not thrusting insolently beyond what our nature warrants; we must allow other beings, also, their place in the presence of the Godhead; we may not set ourselves alone next after the First in a dream-flight which deprives us of our power of attaining identity with the Godhead in the measure possible to the human Soul, that is to say, to the point of likeness to which the Intellectual-Principle leads us; to exalt ourselves above the Intellectual-Principle is to fall from it.

Yet imbeciles are found to accept such teaching at the mere sound of the words "You, yourself, are to be nobler than all else, nobler than men, nobler than even gods." Human audacity is very great: a man once modest, restrained and simple hears, "You, yourself, are the child of God; those men whom you used to venerate, those beings whose worship they inherit from antiquity, none of these are His children; you without lifting a hand are nobler than the very heavens"; others take up the cry: the issue will be much as if in a crowd all equally ignorant of figures, one man were told that he stands a thousand cubic feet; he will naturally accept his thousand cubits even though the others present are said to measure only five cubits; he will merely tell himself that the thousand indicates a considerable figure.

Another point: God has care for you; how then can He be indifferent to the entire Universe in which you exist?

We may be told that He is too much occupied to look upon the Universe, and that it would not be right for Him to do so; yet, when He looks down

and upon these people, is He not looking outside Himself and upon the Universe in which they exist? If He cannot look outside Himself so as to survey the Kosmos, then neither does He look upon them.

But they have no need of Him?

The Universe has need of Him, and He knows its ordering and its indwellers and how far they belong to it and how far to the Supreme, and which of the men upon it are friends of God, mildly acquiescing with the Kosmic dispensation when in the total course of things some pain must be brought to them- for we are to look not to the single will of any man but to the universe entire, regarding every one according to worth but not stopping for such things where all that may is hastening onward.

Not one only kind of being is bent upon this quest, which brings bliss to whatsoever achieves, and earns for the others a future destiny in accord with their power. No man, therefore, may flatter himself that he alone is competent; a pretension is not a possession; many boast though fully conscious of their lack and many imagine themselves to possess what was never theirs and even to be alone in possessing what they alone of men never had.

10. Under detailed investigation, many other tenets of this school- indeed we might say all- could be corrected with an abundance of proof. But I am withheld by regard for some of our own friends who fell in with this doctrine before joining our circle and, strangely, still cling to it.

The school, no doubt, is free-spoken enough- whether in the set purpose of giving its opinions a plausible colour of verity or in honest belief- but we are addressing here our own acquaintances, not those people with whom we could make no way. We have spoken in the hope of preventing our friends from being perturbed by a party which brings, not proof- how could it?- but arbitrary, tyrannical assertion; another style of address would be applicable to such as have the audacity to flout the noble and true doctrines of the august teachers of antiquity.

That method we will not apply; anyone that has fully grasped the preceding discussion will know how to meet every point in the system.

Only one other tenet of theirs will be mentioned before passing the matter; it is one which surpasses all the rest in sheer folly, if that is the word.

They first maintain that the Soul and a certain "Wisdom" [Sophia] declined and entered this lower sphere though they leave us in doubt of whether the movement originated in Soul or in this Sophia of theirs, or whether the two are the same to them- then they tell us that the other Souls

came down in the descent and that these members of Sophia took to themselves bodies, human bodies, for example.

Yet in the same breath, that very Soul which was the occasion of descent to the others is declared not to have descended. "It knew no decline," but merely illuminated the darkness in such a way that an image of it was formed upon the Matter. Then, they shape an image of that image somewhere below- through the medium of Matter or of Materiality or whatever else of many names they choose to give it in their frequent change of terms, invented to darken their doctrine- and so they bring into being what they call the Creator or Demiurge, then this lower is severed from his Mother [Sophia] and becomes the author of the Kosmos down to the latest of the succession of images constituting it.

Such is the blasphemy of one of their writers.

11. Now, in the first place, if the Soul has not actually come down but has illuminated the darkness, how can it truly be said to have declined? The outflow from it of something in the nature of light does not justify the assertion of its decline; for that, it must make an actual movement towards the object lying in the lower realm and illuminate it by contact.

If, on the other hand, the Soul keeps to its own place and illuminates the lower without directing any act towards that end, why should it alone be the illuminant? Why should not the Kosmos draw light also from the yet greater powers contained in the total of existence?

Again, if the Soul possesses the plan of a Universe, and by virtue of this plan illuminates it, why do not that illumination and the creating of the world take place simultaneously? Why must the Soul wait till the representations of the plan be made actual?

Then again this Plan- the "Far Country" of their terminology - brought into being, as they hold, by the greater powers, could not have been the occasion of decline to the creators.

Further, how explain that under this illumination the Matter of the Kosmos produces images of the order of Soul instead of mere bodily-nature? An image of Soul could not demand darkness or Matter, but wherever formed it would exhibit the character of the producing element and remain in close union with it.

Next, is this image a real-being, or, as they say, an Intellection?

If it is a reality, in what way does it differ from its original? By being a distinct form of the Soul? But then, since the original is the reasoning Soul, this secondary form must be the vegetative and generative Soul; and then,

what becomes of the theory that it is produced for glory's sake, what becomes of the creation in arrogance and self-assertion? The theory puts an end also to creation by representation and, still more decidedly, to any thinking in the act; and what need is left for a creator creating by way of Matter and Image?

If it is an Intellection, then we ask first "What justifies the name?" and next, "How does anything come into being unless the Soul give this Intellection creative power and how, after all, can creative power reside in a created thing?" Are we to be told that it is a question of a first Image followed by a second?

But this is quite arbitrary.

And why is fire the first creation?

12. And how does this image set to its task immediately after it comes into being?

By memory of what it has seen?

But it was utterly non-existent, it could have no vision, either it or the Mother they bestow upon it.

Another difficulty: These people come upon earth not as Soul-Images but as veritable Souls; yet, by great stress and strain, one or two of them are able to stir beyond the limits of the world, and when they do attain Reminiscence barely carry with them some slight recollection of the Sphere they once knew: on the other hand, this Image, a new-comer into being, is able, they tell us- as also is its Mother- to form at least some dim representation of the celestial world. It is an Image, stamped in Matter, yet it not merely has the conception of the Supreme and adopts from that world the plan of this, but knows what elements serve the purpose. How, for instance, did it come to make fire before anything else? What made it judge fire a better first than some other object?

Again, if it created the fire of the Universe by thinking of fire, why did it not make the Universe at a stroke by thinking of the Universe? It must have conceived the product complete from the first; the constituent elements would be embraced in that general conception.

The creation must have been in all respects more according to the way of Nature than to that of the arts- for the arts are of later origin than Nature and the Universe, and even at the present stage the partial things brought into being by the natural Kinds do not follow any such order- first fire, then the several other elements, then the various blends of these- on the contrary the living organism entire is encompassed and rounded off

within the uterine germ. Why should not the material of the Universe be similarly embraced in a Kosmic Type in which earth, fire and the rest would be included? We can only suppose that these people themselves, acting by their more authentic Soul, would have produced the world by such a process, but that the Creator had not wit to do so.

And yet to conceive the vast span of the Heavens- to be great in that degree- to devise the obliquity of the Zodiac and the circling path of all the celestial bodies beneath it, and this earth of ours - and all in such a way that reason can be given for the plan - this could never be the work of an Image; it tells of that Power [the All-Soul] next to the very Highest Beings.

Against their will, they themselves admit this: their "outshining upon the darkness," if the doctrine is sifted, makes it impossible to deny the true origins of the Kosmos.

Why should this down-shining take place unless such a process belonged to a universal law?

Either the process is in the order of Nature or against that order. If it is in the nature of things, it must have taken place from eternity; if it is against the nature of things, then the breach of natural right exists in the Supreme also; evil antedates this world; the cause of evil is not the world; on the contrary the Supreme is the evil to us; instead of the Soul's harm coming from this sphere, we have this Sphere harmed by the Soul.

In fine, the theory amounts to making the world one of the Primals, and with it the Matter from which it emerges.

The Soul that declined, they tell us, saw and illuminated the already existent Darkness. Now whence came that Darkness?

If they tell us that the Soul created the Darkness by its Decline, then, obviously, there was nowhere for the Soul to decline to; the cause of the decline was not the Darkness but the very nature of the Soul. The theory, therefore, refers the entire process to pre-existing compulsions: the guilt inheres in the Primal Beings.

13. Those, then, that censure the constitution of the Kosmos do not understand what they are doing or where this audacity leads them. They do not understand that there is a successive order of Primals, Secondaries, Tertiaries and so on continuously to the Ultimates; that nothing is to be blamed for being inferior to the First; that we can but accept, meekly, the constitution of the total, and make our best way towards the Primals, withdrawing from the tragic spectacle, as they see it, of the Kosmic spheres- which in reality are all suave graciousness.

And what, after all, is there so terrible in these Spheres with which it is sought to frighten people unaccustomed to thinking, never trained in an instructive and coherent gnosis?

Even the fact that their material frame is of fire does not make them dreadful; their Movements are in keeping with the All and with the Earth: but what we must consider in them is the Soul, that on which these people base their own title to honour.

And, yet, again, their material frames are pre-eminent in vastness and beauty, as they cooperate in act and in influence with the entire order of Nature, and can never cease to exist as long as the Primals stand; they enter into the completion of the All of which they are major Parts.

If men rank highly among other living Beings, much more do these, whose office in the All is not to play the tyrant but to serve towards beauty and order. The action attributed to them must be understood as a foretelling of coming events, while the causing of all the variety is due, in part to diverse destinies- for there cannot be one lot for the entire body of men- in part to the birth moment, in part to wide divergencies of place, in part to states of the Souls.

Once more, we have no right to ask that all men shall be good, or to rush into censure because such universal virtue is not possible: this would be repeating the error of confusing our sphere with the Supreme and treating evil as a nearly negligible failure in wisdom - as good lessened and dwindling continuously, a continuous fading out; it would be like calling the Nature-Principle evil because it is not Sense-Perception and the thing of sense evil for not being a Reason-Principle. If evil is no more than that, we will be obliged to admit evil in the Supreme also, for there, too, Soul is less exalted than the Intellectual-Principle, and That too has its Superior.

14. In yet another way they infringe still more gravely upon the inviolability of the Supreme.

In the sacred formulas they inscribe, purporting to address the Supernal Beings- not merely the Soul but even the Transcendents - they are simply uttering spells and appeasements and evocations in the idea that these Powers will obey a call and be led about by a word from any of us who is in some degree trained to use the appropriate forms in the appropriate way- certain melodies, certain sounds, specially directed breathings, sibilant cries, and all else to which is ascribed magic potency upon the Supreme. Perhaps they would repudiate any such intention: still they must explain how these things act upon the unembodied: they do not see that the power they attrib-

ute to their own words is so much taken away from the majesty of the divine.

They tell us they can free themselves of diseases.

If they meant, by temperate living and an appropriate regime, they would be right and in accordance with all sound knowledge. But they assert diseases to be Spirit-Beings and boast of being able to expel them by formula: this pretension may enhance their importance with the crowd, gaping upon the powers of magicians; but they can never persuade the intelligent that disease arises otherwise than from such causes as overstrain, excess, deficiency, putrid decay; in a word, some variation whether from within or from without.

The nature of illness is indicated by its very cure. A motion, a medicine, the letting of blood, and the disease shifts down and away; sometimes scantiness of nourishment restores the system: presumably the Spiritual power gets hungry or is debilitated by the purge. Either this Spirit makes a hasty exit or it remains within. If it stays, how does the disease disappear, with the cause still present? If it quits the place, what has driven it out? Has anything happened to it? Are we to suppose it throve on the disease? In that case the disease existed as something distinct from the Spirit-Power. Then again, if it steps in where no cause of sickness exists, why should there be anything else but illness? If there must be such a cause, the Spirit is unnecessary: that cause is sufficient to produce that fever. As for the notion, that just when the cause presents itself, the watchful Spirit leaps to incorporate itself with it, this is simply amusing.

But the manner and motive of their teaching have been sufficiently exhibited; and this was the main purpose of the discussion here upon their Spirit-Powers. I leave it to yourselves to read the books and examine the rest of the doctrine: you will note all through how our form of philosophy inculcates simplicity of character and honest thinking in addition to all other good qualities, how it cultivates reverence and not arrogant self-assertion, how its boldness is balanced by reason, by careful proof, by cautious progression, by the utmost circumspection- and you will compare those other systems to one proceeding by this method. You will find that the tenets of their school have been huddled together under a very different plan: they do not deserve any further examination here.

15. There is, however, one matter which we must on no account overlook- the effect of these teachings upon the hearers led by them into despising the world and all that is in it.

There are two theories as to the attainment of the End of life. The one proposes pleasure, bodily pleasure, as the term; the other pronounces for good and virtue, the desire of which comes from God and moves, by ways to be studied elsewhere, towards God.

Epicurus denies a Providence and recommends pleasure and its enjoyment, all that is left to us: but the doctrine under discussion is still more wanton; it carps at Providence and the Lord of Providence; it scorns every law known to us; immemorial virtue and all restraint it makes into a laughing stock, lest any loveliness be seen on earth; it cuts at the root of all orderly living, and of the righteousness which, innate in the moral sense, is made perfect by thought and by self-discipline: all that would give us a noble human being is gone. What is left for them except where the pupil by his own character betters the teaching- comes to pleasure, self-seeking, the grudge of any share with one's fellows, the pursuit of advantage.

Their error is that they know nothing good here: all they care for is something else to which they will at some future time apply themselves: yet, this world, to those that have known it once, must be the starting-point of the pursuit: arrived here from out of the divine nature, they must inaugurate their effort by some earthly correction. The understanding of beauty is not given except to a nature scorning the delight of the body, and those that have no part in well-doing can make no step towards the Supernal.

This school, in fact, is convicted by its neglect of all mention of virtue: any discussion of such matters is missing utterly: we are not told what virtue is or under what different kinds it appears; there is no word of all the numerous and noble reflections upon it that have come down to us from the ancients; we do not learn what constitutes it or how it is acquired, how the Soul is tended, how it is cleaned. For to say "Look to God" is not helpful without some instruction as to what this looking imports: it might very well be said that one can "look" and still sacrifice no pleasure, still be the slave of impulse, repeating the word God but held in the grip of every passion and making no effort to master any. Virtue, advancing towards the Term and, linked with thought, occupying a Soul makes God manifest: God on the lips, without a good conduct of life, is a word.

16. On the other hand, to despise this Sphere, and the Gods within it or anything else that is lovely, is not the way to goodness.

Every evil-doer began by despising the Gods; and one not previously corrupt, taking to this contempt, even though in other respects not wholly bad, becomes an evil-doer by the very fact.

Besides, in this slighting of the Mundane Gods and the world, the honour they profess for the gods of the Intellectual Sphere becomes an inconsistency; Where we love, our hearts are warm also to the Kin of the beloved; we are not indifferent to the children of our friend. Now every Soul is a child of that Father; but in the heavenly bodies there are Souls, intellective, holy, much closer to the Supernal Beings than are ours; for how can this Kosmos be a thing cut off from That and how imagine the gods in it to stand apart?

But of this matter we have treated elsewhere: here we urge that where there is contempt for the Kin of the Supreme the knowledge of the Supreme itself is merely verbal.

What sort of piety can make Providence stop short of earthly concerns or set any limit whatsoever to it?

And what consistency is there in this school when they proceed to assert that Providence cares for them, though for them alone?

And is this Providence over them to be understood of their existence in that other world only or of their lives here as well? If in the other world, how came they to this? If in this world, why are they not already raised from it?

Again, how can they deny that the Lord of Providence is here? How else can He know either that they are here, or that in their sojourn here they have not forgotten Him and fallen away? And if He is aware of the goodness of some, He must know of the wickedness of others, to distinguish good from bad. That means that He is present to all, is, by whatever mode, within this Universe. The Universe, therefore, must be participant in Him.

If He is absent from the Universe, He is absent from yourselves, and you can have nothing to tell about Him or about the powers that come after Him.

But, allowing that a Providence reaches to you from the world beyond-making any concession to your liking- it remains none the less certain that this world holds from the Supernal and is not deserted and will not be: a Providence watching entires is even more likely than one over fragments only; and similarly, Participation is more perfect in the case of the All-Soul-as is shown, further, by the very existence of things and the wisdom manifest in their existence. Of those that advance these wild pretensions, who is so well ordered, so wise, as the Universe? The comparison is laughable, utterly out of place; to make it, except as a help towards truth, would be impiety.

The very question can be entertained by no intelligent being but only by one so blind, so utterly devoid of perception and thought, so far from any vision of the Intellectual Universe as not even to see this world of our own.

For who that truly perceives the harmony of the Intellectual Realm could fail, if he has any bent towards music, to answer to the harmony in sensible sounds? What geometrician or arithmetician could fail to take pleasure in the symmetries, correspondences and principles of order observed in visible things? Consider, even, the case of pictures: those seeing by the bodily sense the productions of the art of painting do not see the one thing in the one only way; they are deeply stirred by recognizing in the objects depicted to the eyes the presentation of what lies in the idea, and so are called to recollection of the truth- the very experience out of which Love rises. Now, if the sight of Beauty excellently reproduced upon a face hurries the mind to that other Sphere, surely no one seeing the loveliness lavish in the world of sense- this vast orderliness, the Form which the stars even in their remoteness display- no one could be so dull-witted, so immoveable, as not to be carried by all this to recollection, and gripped by reverent awe in the thought of all this, so great, sprung from that greatness. Not to answer thus could only be to have neither fathomed this world nor had any vision of that other.

17. Perhaps the hate of this school for the corporeal is due to their reading of Plato who inveighs against body as a grave hindrance to Soul and pronounces the corporeal to be characteristically the inferior.

Then let them for the moment pass over the corporeal element in the Universe and study all that still remains.

They will think of the Intellectual Sphere which includes within itself the Ideal-Form realized in the Kosmos. They will think of the Souls, in their ordered rank, that produce incorporeal magnitude and lead the Intelligible out towards spatial extension, so that finally the thing of process becomes, by its magnitude, as adequate a representation as possible of the principle void of parts which is its model- the greatness of power there being translated here into greatness of bulk. Then whether they think of the Kosmic Sphere [the All-Soul] as already in movement under the guidance of that power of God which holds it through and through, beginning and middle and end, or whether they consider it as in rest and exercising as yet no outer governance: either approach will lead to a true appreciation of the Soul that conducts this Universe.

Now let them set body within it- not in the sense that Soul suffers any

change but that, since "In the Gods there can be no grudging," it gives to its inferior all that any partial thing has strength to receive and at once their conception of the Kosmos must be revised; they cannot deny that the Soul of the Kosmos has exercised such a weight of power as to have brought the corporeal-principle, in itself unlovely, to partake of good and beauty to the utmost of its receptivity- and to a pitch which stirs Souls, beings of the divine order.

These people may no doubt say that they themselves feel no such stirring, and that they see no difference between beautiful and ugly forms of body; but, at that, they can make no distinction between the ugly and the beautiful in conduct; sciences can have no beauty; there can be none in thought; and none, therefore, in God. This world descends from the Firsts: if this world has no beauty, neither has its Source; springing thence, this world, too, must have its beautiful things. And while they proclaim their contempt for earthly beauty, they would do well to ignore that of youths and women so as not to be overcome by incontinence.

In fine, we must consider that their self-satisfaction could not turn upon a contempt for anything indisputably base; theirs is the perverse pride of despising what was once admired.

We must always keep in mind that the beauty in a partial thing cannot be identical with that in a whole; nor can any several objects be as stately as the total.

And we must recognize, that, even in the world of sense and part, there are things of a loveliness comparable to that of the Celestials- forms whose beauty must fill us with veneration for their creator and convince us of their origin in the divine, forms which show how ineffable is the beauty of the Supreme since they cannot hold us but we must, though in all admiration, leave these for those. Further, wherever there is interior beauty, we may be sure that inner and outer correspond; where the interior is vile, all is brought low by that flaw in the dominants.

Nothing base within can be beautiful without- at least not with an authentic beauty, for there are examples of a good exterior not sprung from a beauty dominant within; people passing as handsome but essentially base have that, a spurious and superficial beauty: if anyone tells me he has seen people really fine-looking but interiorly vile, I can only deny it; we have here simply a false notion of personal beauty; unless, indeed, the inner vileness were an accident in a nature essentially fine; in this Sphere there are many obstacles to self-realization. In any case the All is beautiful, and there can

be no obstacle to its inner goodness: where the nature of a thing does not comport perfection from the beginning, there may be a failure in complete expression; there may even be a fall to vileness, but the All never knew a childlike immaturity; it never experienced a progress bringing novelty into it; it never had bodily growth: there was nowhere from whence it could take such increment; it was always the All-Container.

And even for its Soul no one could imagine any such a path of process: or, if this were conceded, certainly it could not be towards evil.

18. But perhaps this school will maintain that, while their teaching leads to a hate and utter abandonment of the body, ours binds the Soul down in it.

In other words: two people inhabit the one stately house; one of them declaims against its plan and against its Architect, but none the less maintains his residence in it; the other makes no complaint, asserts the entire competency of the Architect and waits cheerfully for the day when he may leave it, having no further need of a house: the malcontent imagines himself to be the wiser and to be the readier to leave because he has learned to repeat that the walls are of soulless stone and timber and that the place falls far short of a true home; he does not see that his only distinction is in not being able to bear with necessity assuming that his conduct, his grumbling, does not cover a secret admiration for the beauty of those same "stones." As long as we have bodies we must inhabit the dwellings prepared for us by our good sister the Soul in her vast power of labourless creation.

Or would this school reject the word Sister? They are willing to address the lowest of men as brothers; are they capable of such raving as to disown the tie with the Sun and the powers of the Heavens and the very Soul of the Kosmos? Such kinship, it is true, is not for the vile; it may be asserted only of those that have become good and are no longer body but embodied Soul and of a quality to inhabit the body in a mode very closely resembling the indwelling of the All-Soul in the universal frame. And this means continence, self-restraint, holding staunch against outside pleasure and against outer spectacle, allowing no hardship to disturb the mind. The All-Soul is immune from shock; there is nothing that can affect it: but we, in our passage here, must call on virtue in repelling these assaults, reduced for us from the beginning by a great conception of life, annulled by matured strength.

Attaining to something of this immunity, we begin to reproduce within ourselves the Soul of the vast All and of the heavenly bodies: when we are come to the very closest resemblance, all the effort of our fervid pursuit

will be towards that goal to which they also tend; their contemplative vision becomes ours, prepared as we are, first by natural disposition and afterwards by all this training, for that state which is theirs by the Principle of their Being.

This school may lay claim to vision as a dignity reserved to themselves, but they are not any the nearer to vision by the claim- or by the boast that while the celestial powers, bound for ever to the ordering of the Heavens, can never stand outside the material universe, they themselves have their freedom in their death. This is a failure to grasp the very notion of "standing outside," a failure to appreciate the mode in which the All-Soul cares for the unensouled.

No: it is possible to go free of love for the body; to be clean-living, to disregard death; to know the Highest and aim at that other world; not to slander, as negligent in the quest, others who are able for it and faithful to it; and not to err with those that deny vital motion to the stars because to our sense they stand still- the error which in another form leads this school to deny outer vision to the Star-Nature, only because they do not see the Star-Soul in outer manifestation.

EIGHTH TRACTATE

NATURE CONTEMPLATION AND THE ONE

1. Supposing we played a little before entering upon our serious concern and maintained that all things are striving after Contemplation, looking to Vision as their one end- and this, not merely beings endowed with reason but even the unreasoning animals, the Principle that rules in growing things, and the Earth that produces these- and that all achieve their purpose in the measure possible to their kind, each attaining Vision and possessing itself of the End in its own way and degree, some things in entire reality, others in mimicry and in image- we would scarcely find anyone to endure so strange a thesis. But in a discussion entirely among ourselves there is no risk in a light handling of our own ideas.

Well- in the play of this very moment am I engaged in the act of Contemplation?

Yes; I and all that enter this play are in Contemplation: our play aims at Vision; and there is every reason to believe that child or man, in sport or earnest, is playing or working only towards Vision, that every act is an effort towards Vision; the compulsory act, which tends rather to bring the Vision down to outward things, and the act thought of as voluntary, less concerned with the outer, originate alike in the effort towards Vision.

The case of Man will be treated later on; let us speak, first, of the earth and of the trees and vegetation in general, asking ourselves what is the nature of Contemplation in them, how we relate to any Contemplative activity the labour and productiveness of the earth, how Nature, held to be devoid of reason and even of conscious representation, can either harbour Contemplation or produce by means of the Contemplation which it does not possess.

2. There is, obviously, no question here of hands or feet, of any implement borrowed or inherent: Nature needs simply the Matter which it is to work upon and bring under Form; its productivity cannot depend upon mechanical operation. What driving or hoisting goes to produce all that variety of colour and pattern?

The wax-workers, whose methods have been cited as parallel to the creative act of Nature, are unable to make colours; all they can do to impose upon their handicraft colours taken from elsewhere.

None the less there is a parallel which demands attention: in the case of

workers in such arts there must be something locked within themselves, an efficacy not going out from them and yet guiding their hands in all their creation; and this observation should have indicated a similar phenomenon in Nature; it should be clear that this indwelling efficacy, which makes without hands, must exist in Nature, no less than in the craftsman- but, there, as a thing completely inbound. Nature need possess no outgoing force as against that remaining within; the only moved thing is Matter; there can be no moved phase in this Nature-Principle; any such moved phase could not be the primal mover; this Nature-Principle is no such moved entity; it is the unmoved Principle operating in the Kosmos.

We may be answered that the Reason-Principle is, no doubt, unmoved, but that the Nature-Principle, another being, operates by motion.

But, if Nature entire is in question here, it is identical with the Reason-Principle; and any part of it that is unmoved is the Reason-Principle. The Nature-Principle must be an Ideal-Form, not a compound of Form and Matter; there is no need for it to possess Matter, hot and cold: the Matter that underlies it, on which it exercises its creative act, brings all that with it, or, natively without quality, becomes hot and cold, and all the rest, when brought under Reason: Matter, to become fire, demands the approach not of fire but of a Reason-Principle.

This is no slight evidence that in the animal and vegetable realms the Reason-Principles are the makers and that Nature is a Reason-Principle producing a second Reason-Principle, its offspring, which, in turn, while itself, still, remaining intact, communicates something to the underlie, Matter.

The Reason-Principle presiding over visible Shape is the very ultimate of its order, a dead thing unable to produce further: that which produces in the created realm is the living Reason-Principle - brother no doubt, to that which gives mere shape, but having life-giving power.

3. But if this Reason-Principle [Nature] is in act- and produces by the process indicated- how can it have any part in Contemplation?

To begin with, since in all its production it is stationary and intact, a Reason-Principle self-indwelling, it is in its own nature a Contemplative act. All doing must be guided by an Idea, and will therefore be distinct from that Idea: the Reason-Principle then, as accompanying and guiding the work, will be distinct from the work; not being action but Reason-Principle it is, necessarily, Contemplation.

Taking the Reason-Principle, the Logos, in all its phases, the lowest and last springs from a mental act [in the higher Logos] and is itself a contempla-

tion, though only in the sense of being contemplated, but above it stands the total Logos with its two distinguishable phases, first, that identified not as Nature but as All-Soul and, next, that operating in Nature and being itself the Nature-Principle.

And does this Reason-Principle, Nature, spring from a contemplation? Wholly and solely?

From self-contemplation, then? Or what are we to think? It derives from a Contemplation and some contemplating Being; how are we to suppose it to have Contemplation itself?

The Contemplation springing from the reasoning faculty - that, I mean, of planning its own content, it does not possess.

But why not, since it is a phase of Life, a Reason-Principle and a creative Power?

Because to plan for a thing is to lack it: Nature does not lack; it creates because it possesses. Its creative act is simply its possession of its own characteristic Essence; now its Essence, since it is a Reason-Principle, is to be at once an act of contemplation and an object of contemplation. In other words, the Nature-Principle produces by virtue of being an act of contemplation, an object of contemplation and a Reason-Principle; on this triple character depends its creative efficacy.

Thus the act of production is seen to be in Nature an act of contemplation, for creation is the outcome of a contemplation which never becomes anything else, which never does anything else, but creates by simply being a contemplation.

4. And Nature, asked why it brings forth its works, might answer if it cared to listen and to speak:

"It would have been more becoming to put no question but to learn in silence just as I myself am silent and make no habit of talking. And what is your lesson? This; that whatsoever comes into being is my vision, seen in my silence, the vision that belongs to my character who, sprung from vision, am vision-loving and create vision by the vision-seeing faculty within me. The mathematicians from their vision draw their figures: but I draw nothing: I gaze and the figures of the material world take being as if they fell from my contemplation. As with my Mother (the All-Soul) and the Beings that begot me so it is with me: they are born of a Contemplation and my birth is from them, not by their Act but by their Being; they are the loftier Reason-Principles, they contemplate themselves and I am born."

Now what does this tell us?

It tells: that what we know as Nature is a Soul, offspring of a yet earlier Soul of more powerful life; that it possesses, therefore, in its repose, a vision within itself; that it has not tendency upward nor even downward but is at peace, steadfast, in its own Essence; that, in this immutability accompanied by what may be called Self-Consciousness, it possesses- within the measure of its possibility- a knowledge of the realm of subsequent things perceived in virtue of that understanding and consciousness; and, achieving thus a resplendent and delicious spectacle, has no further aim.

Of course, while it may be convenient to speak of "understanding" or "perception" in the Nature-Principle, this is not in the full sense applicable to other beings; we are applying to sleep a word borrowed from the wake.

For the Vision on which Nature broods, inactive, is a self-intuition, a spectacle laid before it by virtue of its unaccompanied self-concentration and by the fact that in itself it belongs to the order of intuition. It is a Vision silent but somewhat blurred, for there exists another a clearer of which Nature is the image: hence all that Nature produces is weak; the weaker act of intuition produces the weaker object.

In the same way, human beings, when weak on the side of contemplation, find in action their trace of vision and of reason: their spiritual feebleness unfits them for contemplation; they are left with a void, because they cannot adequately seize the vision; yet they long for it; they are hurried into action as their way to the vision which they cannot attain by intellection. They act from the desire of seeing their action, and of making it visible and sensible to others when the result shall prove fairly well equal to the plan.

Everywhere, doing and making will be found to be either an attenuation or a complement of vision-attenuation if the doer was aiming only at the thing done; complement if he is to possess something nobler to gaze upon than the mere work produced.

Given the power to contemplate the Authentic, who would run, of choice, after its image?

The relation of action to contemplation is indicated in the way duller children, inapt to study and speculation, take to crafts and manual labour.

5. This discussion of Nature has shown us how the origin of things is a Contemplation: we may now take the matter up to the higher Soul; we find that the Contemplation pursued by this, its instinct towards knowing and enquiring, the birth pangs set up by the knowledge it attains, its teeming

fullness, have caused it- in itself, all one object of Vision- to produce another Vision [that of the Kosmos]: it is just as a given science, complete in itself, becomes the source and cause of what might be called a minor science in the student who attains to some partial knowledge of all its divisions. But the visible objects and the objects of intellectual contemplation of this later creation are dim and helpless by the side of the content of the Soul.

The primal phase of the Soul- inhabitant of the Supreme and, by its participation in the Supreme, filled and illuminated - remains unchangeably There; but in virtue of that first participation, that of the primal participant, a secondary phase also participates in the Supreme, and this secondary goes forth ceaselessly as Life streaming from Life; for energy runs through the Universe and there is no extremity at which it dwindles out. But, travel as far as it may, it never draws that first part of itself from the place whence the outgoing began: if it did, it would no longer be everywhere [its continuous Being would be broken and] it would be present at the end, only, of its course.

None the less that which goes forth cannot be equal to that which remains.

In sum, then: The Soul is to extend throughout the Universe, no spot void of its energy: but, a prior is always different from its secondary, and energy is a secondary, rising as it must from contemplation or act; act, however, is not at this stage existent since it depends upon contemplation: therefore the Soul, while its phases differ, must, in all of them, remain a contemplation and what seems to be an act done under contemplation must be in reality that weakened contemplation of which we have spoken: the engendered must respect the Kind, but in weaker form, dwindled in the descent.

All goes softly since nothing here demands the parade of thought or act upon external things: it is a Soul in vision and, by this vision, creating its own subsequent- this Principle [of Nature], itself also contemplative but in the feebler degree since it lies further away and cannot reproduce the quality or experiences of its prior- a Vision creates the Vision.

[Such creative contemplation is not inexplicable] for no limit exists either to contemplation or to its possible objects, and this explains how the Soul is universal: where can this thing fail to be, which is one identical thing in every Soul; Vision is not cabined within the bourne of magnitude.

This, of course, does not mean that the Soul is present at the same

strength in each and every place and thing- any more than that it is at the same strength in each of its own phases.

The Charioteer [the Leading Principle of the Soul, in the Phaedrus Myth] gives the two horses [its two dissonant faculties] what he has seen and they, taking that gift, showed that they were hungry for what made that vision; there was something lacking to them: if in their desire they acted, their action aimed at what they craved for- and that was vision, and an object of vision.

6. Action, thus, is set towards contemplation and an object of contemplation, so that even those whose life is in doing have seeing as their object; what they have not been able to achieve by the direct path, they hope to come at by the circuit.

Further: suppose they succeed; they desired a certain thing to come about, not in order to be unaware of it but to know it, to see it present before the mind: their success is the laying up of a vision.

We act for the sake of some good; this means not for something to remain outside ourselves, not in order that we possess nothing but that we may hold the good of the action. And hold it, where? Where but in the mind?

Thus once more, action is brought back to contemplation: for [mind or] Soul is a Reason-Principle and anything that one lays up in the Soul can be no other than a Reason-Principle, a silent thing, the more certainly such a principle as the impression made is the deeper.

This vision achieved, the acting instinct pauses; the mind is satisfied and seeks nothing further; the contemplation, in one so conditioned, remains absorbed within as having acquired certainty to rest upon. The brighter the certainty, the more tranquil is the contemplation as having acquired the more perfect unity; and - for now we come to the serious treatment of the subject - in proportion to the truth with which the knowing faculty knows, it comes to identification with the object of its knowledge.

As long as duality persists, the two lie apart, parallel as it were to each other; there is a pair in which the two elements remain strange to one another, as when Ideal-Principles laid up in the mind or Soul remain idle.

Hence the Idea must not be left to lie outside but must be made one identical thing with the soul of the novice so that he finds it really his own.

The Soul, once domiciled within that Idea and brought to likeness with it, becomes productive, active; what it always held by its primary nature it now grasps with knowledge and applies in deed, so becoming, as it were, a new thing and, informed as it now is by the purely intellectual, it sees [in its

outgoing act] as a stranger looking upon a strange world. It was, no doubt, essentially a Reason-Principle, even an Intellectual Principle; but its function is to see a [lower] realm which these do not see.

For, it is a not a complete thing: it has a lack; it is incomplete in regard to its Prior; yet it, also, has a tranquil vision of what it produces. What it has once brought into being it produces no more, for all its productiveness is determined by this lack: it produces for the purpose of Contemplation, in the desire of knowing all its content: when there is question of practical things it adapts its content to the outside order.

The Soul has a greater content than Nature has and therefore it is more tranquil; it is more nearly complete and therefore more contemplative. It is, however, not perfect, and is all the more eager to penetrate the object of contemplation, and it seeks the vision that comes by observation. It leaves its native realm and busies itself elsewhere; then it returns, and it possesses its vision by means of that phase of itself from which it had parted. The self-indwelling Soul inclines less to such experiences.

The Sage, then, is the man made over into a Reason-Principle: to others he shows his act but in himself he is Vision: such a man is already set, not merely in regard to exterior things but also within himself, towards what is one and at rest: all his faculty and life are inward-bent.

7. Certain Principles, then, we may take to be established- some self-evident, others brought out by our treatment above:

All the forms of Authentic Existence spring from vision and are a vision. Everything that springs from these Authentic Existences in their vision is an object of vision-manifest to sensation or to true knowledge or to surface-awareness. All act aims at this knowing; all impulse is towards knowledge, all that springs from vision exists to produce Ideal-Form, that is a fresh object of vision, so that universally, as images of their engendering principles, they all produce objects of vision, Ideal-forms. In the engendering of these sub-existences, imitations of the Authentic, it is made manifest that the creating powers operate not for the sake of creation and action but in order to produce an object of vision. This same vision is the ultimate purpose of all the acts of the mind and, even further downward, of all sensation, since sensation also is an effort towards knowledge; lower still, Nature, producing similarly its subsequent principle, brings into being the vision and Idea that we know in it. It is certain, also, that as the Firsts exist in vision all other things must be straining towards the same condition; the starting point is, universally, the goal.

When living things reproduce their Kind, it is that the Reason-Principles within stir them; the procreative act is the expression of a contemplation, a travail towards the creation of many forms, many objects of contemplation, so that the universe may be filled full with Reason-Principles and that contemplation may be, as nearly as possible, endless: to bring anything into being is to produce an Idea-Form and that again is to enrich the universe with contemplation: all the failures, alike in being and in doing, are but the swerving of visionaries from the object of vision: in the end the sorriest craftsman is still a maker of forms, ungracefully. So Love, too, is vision with the pursuit of Ideal-Form.

8. From this basis we proceed:

In the advancing stages of Contemplation rising from that in Nature, to that in the Soul and thence again to that in the Intellectual-Principle itself the object contemplated becomes progressively a more and more intimate possession of the Contemplating Beings, more and more one thing with them; and in the advanced Soul the objects of knowledge, well on the way towards the Intellectual-Principle, are close to identity with their container.

Hence we may conclude that, in the Intellectual-Principle Itself, there is complete identity of Knower and Known, and this not by way of domiciliation, as in the case of even the highest soul, but by Essence, by the fact that, there, no distinction exists between Being and Knowing; we cannot stop at a principle containing separate parts; there must always be a yet higher, a principle above all such diversity.

The Supreme must be an entity in which the two are one; it will, therefore, be a Seeing that lives, not an object of vision like things existing in something other than themselves: what exists in an outside element is some mode of living-thing; it is not the Self-Living.

Now admitting the existence of a living thing that is at once a Thought and its object, it must be a Life distinct from the vegetative or sensitive life or any other life determined by Soul.

In a certain sense no doubt all lives are thoughts - but qualified as thought vegetative, thought sensitive and thought psychic.

What, then, makes them thoughts?

The fact that they are Reason-Principles. Every life is some form of thought, but of a dwindling clearness like the degrees of life itself. The first and clearest Life and the first Intelligence are one Being. The First Life, then, is an Intellection and the next form of Life is the next Intellection and the last form of Life is the last form of Intellection. Thus every Life, of the

order strictly so called, is an Intellection.

But while men may recognize grades in life they reject grade in thought; to them there are thoughts [full and perfect] and anything else is no thought.

This is simply because they do not seek to establish what Life is.

The essential is to observe that, here again, all reasoning shows that whatever exists is a by-work of visioning: if, then, the truest Life is such by virtue of an Intellection and is identical with the truest Intellection, then the truest Intellection is a living being; Contemplation and its object constitute a living thing, a Life, two inextricably one.

The duality, thus, is a unity; but how is this unity also a plurality?

The explanation is that in a unity there can be no seeing [a pure unity has no room for vision and an object]; and in its Contemplation the One is not acting as a Unity; if it were, the Intellectual-Principle cannot exist. The Highest began as a unity but did not remain as it began; all unknown to itself, it became manifold; it grew, as it were, pregnant: desiring universal possession, it flung itself outward, though it were better had it never known the desire by which a Secondary came into being: it is like a Circle [in the Idea] which in projection becomes a figure, a surface, a circumference, a centre, a system of radii, of upper and lower segments. The Whence is the better; the Whither is less good: the Whence is not the same as the Whence-followed-by-a-Whither; the Whence all alone is greater than with the Whither added to it.

The Intellectual-Principle on the other hand was never merely the Principle of an inviolable unity; it was a universal as well and, being so, was the Intellectual-Principle of all things. Being, thus, all things and the Principle of all, it must essentially include this part of itself [this element-of-plurality] which is universal and is all things: otherwise, it contains a part which is not Intellectual-Principle: it will be a juxtaposition of non-Intellectuals, a huddled heap waiting to be made over from the mass of things into the Intellectual-Principle!

We conclude that this Being is limitless and that, in all the outflow from it, there is no lessening either in its emanation, since this also is the entire universe, nor in itself, the starting point, since it is no assemblage of parts [to be diminished by any outgo].

9. Clearly a Being of this nature is not the primal existent; there must exist that which transcends it, that Being [the Absolute], to which all our discussion has been leading.

In the first place, Plurality is later than Unity. The Intellectual-Principle is a number [= the expression of a plurality]; and number derives from unity: the source of a number such as this must be the authentically One. Further, it is the sum of an Intellectual-Being with the object of its Intellection, so that it is a duality; and, given this duality, we must find what exists before it.

What is this?

The Intellectual-Principle taken separately, perhaps?

No: an Intellect is always inseparable from an intelligible object; eliminate the intelligible, and the Intellectual-Principle disappears with it. If, then, what we are seeking cannot be the Intellectual-Principle but must be something that rejects the duality there present, then the Prior demanded by that duality must be something on the further side of the Intellectual-Principle.

But might it not be the Intelligible object itself?

No: for the Intelligible makes an equally inseparable duality with the Intellectual-Principle.

If, then, neither the Intellectual-Principle nor the Intelligible Object can be the First Existent, what is?

Our answer can only be:

The source of both.

What will This be; under what character can we picture It?

It must be either Intellective or without Intellection: if Intellective it is the Intellectual-Principle; if not, it will be without even knowledge of itself—so that, either way, what is there so august about it?

If we define it as The Good and the wholly simplex, we will, no doubt, be telling the truth, but we will not be giving any certain and lucid account of it as long as we have in mind no entity in which to lodge the conception by which we define it.

Yet: our knowledge of everything else comes by way of our intelligence; our power is that of knowing the intelligible by means of the intelligence: but this Entity transcends all of the intellectual nature; by what direct intuition, then, can it be brought within our grasp?

To this question the answer is that we can know it only in the degree of human faculty: we indicate it by virtue of what in ourselves is like it.

For in us, also, there is something of that Being; nay, nothing, ripe for that participation, can be void of it.

Wherever you be, you have only to range over against this omnipresent

Being that in you which is capable of drawing from It, and you have your share in it: imagine a voice sounding over a vast waste of land, and not only over the emptiness alone but over human beings; wherever you be in that great space you have but to listen and you take the voice entire- entire though yet with a difference.

And what do we take when we thus point the Intelligence?

The Intellectual-Principle in us must mount to its origins: essentially a thing facing two ways, it must deliver itself over to those powers within it which tend upward; if it seeks the vision of that Being, it must become something more than Intellect.

For the Intellectual-Principle is the earliest form of Life: it is the Activity presiding over the outflowing of the universal Order - the outflow, that is, of the first moment, not that of the continuous process.

In its character as Life, as emanation, as containing all things in their precise forms and not merely in the agglomerate mass - for this would be to contain them imperfectly and inarticulately - it must of necessity derive from some other Being, from one that does not emanate but is the Principle of Emanation, of Life, of Intellect and of the Universe.

For the Universe is not a Principle and Source: it springs from a source, and that source cannot be the All or anything belonging to the All, since it is to generate the All, and must be not a plurality but the Source of plurality, since universally a begetting power is less complex than the begotten. Thus the Being that has engendered the Intellectual-Principle must be more simplex than the Intellectual-Principle.

We may be told that this engendering Principle is the One-and-All.

But, at that, it must be either each separate entity from among all or it will be all things in the one mass.

Now if it were the massed total of all, it must be of later origin than any of the things of which it is the sum; if it precedes the total, it differs from the things that make up the total and they from it: if it and the total of things constitute a co-existence, it is not a Source. But what we are probing for must be a Source; it must exist before all, that all may be fashioned as sequel to it.

As for the notion that it may be each separate entity of the All, this would make a self-Identity into a what you like, where you like, indifferently, and would, besides, abolish all distinction in things themselves.

Once more we see that this can be no thing among things but must be prior to all things.

10. And what will such a Principle essentially be?

The potentiality of the Universe: the potentiality whose non-existence would mean the non-existence of all the Universe and even of the Intellectual-Principle which is the primal Life and all Life.

This Principle on the thither side of Life is the cause of Life - for that Manifestation of Life which is the Universe of things is not the First Activity; it is itself poured forth, so to speak, like water from a spring.

Imagine a spring that has no source outside itself; it gives itself to all the rivers, yet is never exhausted by what they take, but remains always integrally as it was; the tides that proceed from it are at one within it before they run their several ways, yet all, in some sense, know beforehand down what channels they will pour their streams.

Or: think of the Life coursing throughout some mighty tree while yet it is the stationary Principle of the whole, in no sense scattered over all that extent but, as it were, vested in the root: it is the giver of the entire and manifold life of the tree, but remains unmoved itself, not manifold but the Principle of that manifold life.

And this surprises no one: though it is in fact astonishing how all that varied vitality springs from the unvarying, and how that very manifoldness could not be unless before the multiplicity there were something all single-ness; for, the Principle is not broken into parts to make the total; on the contrary, such partition would destroy both; nothing would come into being if its cause, thus broken up, changed character.

Thus we are always brought back to The One.

Every particular thing has a One of its own to which it may be traced; the All has its One, its Prior but not yet the Absolute One; through this we reach that Absolute One, where all such reference comes to an end.

Now when we reach a One- the stationary Principle- in the tree, in the animal, in Soul, in the All- we have in every case the most powerful, the precious element: when we come to the One in the Authentically Existent Beings- their Principle and source and potentiality- shall we lose confidence and suspect it of being-nothing?

Certainly this Absolute is none of the things of which it is the source- its nature is that nothing can be affirmed of it - not existence, not essence, not life- since it is That which transcends all these. But possess yourself of it by the very elimination of Being and you hold a marvel. Thrusting forward to This, attaining, and resting in its content, seek to grasp it more and more understanding it by that intuitive thrust alone, but knowing its great-

ness by the Beings that follow upon it and exist by its power.

Another approach:

The Intellectual-Principle is a Seeing, and a Seeing which itself sees; therefore it is a potentiality which has become effective.

This implies the distinction of Matter and Form in it- as there must be in all actual seeing- the Matter in this case being the Intelligibles which the Intellectual-Principle contains and sees.

All actual seeing implies duality; before the seeing takes place there is the pure unity [of the power of seeing]. That unity [of principle] acquires duality [in the act of seeing], and the duality is [always to be traced back to] a unity.

Now as our sight requires the world of sense for its satisfaction and realization, so the vision in the Intellectual-Principle demands, for its completion, The Good.

It cannot be, itself, The Good, since then it would not need to see or to perform any other Act; for The Good is the centre of all else, and it is by means of The Good that every thing has Act, while the Good is in need of nothing and therefore possesses nothing beyond itself.

Once you have uttered "The Good," add no further thought: by any addition, and in proportion to that addition, you introduce a deficiency.

Do not even say that it has Intellection; you would be dividing it; it would become a duality, Intellect and the Good. The Good has no need of the Intellectual-Principle which, on the contrary, needs it, and, attaining it, is shaped into Goodness and becomes perfect by it: the Form thus received, sprung from the Good, brings it to likeness with the Good.

Thus the traces of the Good discerned upon it must be taken as indication of the nature of that Archetype: we form a conception of its Authentic Being from its image playing upon the Intellectual-Principle. This image of itself, it has communicated to the Intellect that contemplates it: thus all the striving is on the side of the Intellect, which is the eternal striver and eternally the attainer. The Being beyond neither strives, since it feels no lack, nor attains, since it has no striving. And this marks it off from the Intellectual-Principle, to which characteristically belongs the striving, the concentrated strain towards its Form.

Yet: The Intellectual-Principle; beautiful; the most beautiful of all; lying lapped in pure light and in clear radiance; circumscribing the Nature of the Authentic Existents; the original of which this beautiful world is a shadow and an image; tranquil in the fullness of glory since in it there is nothing

devoid of intellect, nothing dark or out of rule; a living thing in a life of blessedness: this, too, must overwhelm with awe any that has seen it, and penetrated it, to become a unit of its Being.

But: As one that looks up to the heavens and sees the splendour of the stars thinks of the Maker and searches, so whoever has contemplated the Intellectual Universe and known it and wondered for it must search after its Maker too. What Being has raised so noble a fabric? And where? And how? Who has begotten such a child, this Intellectual-Principle, this lovely abundance so abundantly endowed?

The Source of all this cannot be an Intellect; nor can it be an abundant power: it must have been before Intellect and abundance were; these are later and things of lack; abundance had to be made abundant and Intellection needed to know.

These are very near to the un-needing, to that which has no need of Knowing, they have abundance and intellection authentically, as being the first to possess. But, there is that before them which neither needs nor possesses anything, since, needing or possessing anything else, it would not be what it is- the Good.

NINTH TRACTATE

DETACHED CONSIDERATIONS

1. "The Intellectual-Principle" [= the Divine Mind]- we read [in the *Timaeus*]- "looks upon the Ideas indwelling in that Being which is the Essentially Living [= according to Plotinus, the Intellectual Realm], "and then"- the text proceeds- "the Creator judged that all the content of that essentially living Being must find place in this lower universe also."

Are we meant to gather that the Ideas came into being before the Intellectual-Principle so that it "sees them" as previously existent? The first step is to make sure whether the "Living Being" of the text is to be distinguished from the Intellectual-Principle as another thing than it.

It might be argued that the Intellectual-Principle is the Contemplator and therefore that the Living-Being contemplated is not the Intellectual-Principle but must be described as the Intellectual Object so that the

FIFTH TRACTATE

THAT THE INTELLECTUAL BEINGS ARE NOT OUTSIDE
THE INTELLECTUAL-PRINCIPLE: AND ON
THE NATURE OF THE GOOD

1. The Intellectual-Principle, the veritably and essentially intellective, can this be conceived as ever falling into error, ever failing to think reality?

Assuredly no: it would no longer be intelligent and therefore no longer Intellectual-Principle: it must know unceasingly - and never forget; and its knowledge can be no guesswork, no hesitating assent, no acceptance of an alien report. Nor can it call on demonstration or, we are told it may at times act by this or, I method, at least there must be something patent to it in virtue of its own nature. In actual fact reason tells us that all its knowledge is thus inherent to it, for there is no means by which to distinguish between the spontaneous knowledge and the other. But, in any case, some knowledge, it is conceded, is inherent to it. Whence are we to understand the certainty of this knowledge to come to it or how do its objects carry the conviction of their reality?

Consider sense-knowledge: its objects seem most patently certified, yet the doubt returns whether the apparent reality may not lie in the states of the percipient rather than in the material before him; the decision demands intelligence or reasoning. Besides, even granting that what the senses grasp is really contained in the objects, none the less what is thus known by the senses is an image: sense can never grasp the thing itself; this remains for ever outside.

Now, if the Intellectual-Principle in its act - that is in knowing the intellectual - is to know these its objects as alien, we have to explain how it makes contact with them: obviously it might never come upon them, and so might never know them; or it might know them only upon the meeting: its knowing, at that, would not be an enduring condition. If we are told that the Intellectual-Principle and the Intellectual Objects are linked in a standing unity, we demand the description of this unity.

Next, the intellections would be impressions, that is to say not native act but violence from without: now how is such impressing possible and what shape could the impressions bear?

Intellection, again, becomes at this a mere handling of the external, exactly like sense-perception. What then distinguishes it unless that it deals with objects of less extension? And what certitude can it have that its knowledge

is true? Or what enables it to pronounce that the object is good, beautiful, or just, when each of these ideas is to stand apart from itself? The very principles of judgement, by which it must be guided, would be [as Ideas] excluded: with objects and canons alike outside it, so is truth.

Again; either the objects of the Intellectual-Principle are senseless and devoid of life and intellect or they are in possession of Intellect.

Now, if they are in possession of Intellect, that realm is a union of both and is Truth. This combined Intellectual realm will be the Primal Intellect: we have only then to examine how this reality, conjoint of Intellectual-Principle and its object, is to be understood, whether as combining self-united identity with yet duality and difference, or what other relation holds between them.

If on the contrary the objects of Intellectual-Principle are without intelligence and life, what are they? They cannot be premises, axioms or predicates: as predicates they would not have real existence; they would be affirmations linking separate entities, as when we affirm that justice is good though justice and good are distinct realities.

If we are told that they are self-standing entities - the distinct beings Justice and Good- then [supposing them to be outside] the Intellectual Realm will not be a unity nor be included in any unity: all is sundered individuality. Where, then, are they and what spatial distinction keeps them apart? How does the Intellectual-Principle come to meet with them as it travels round; what keeps each true to its character; what gives them enduring identity; what conceivable shape or character can they have? They are being presented to us as some collection of figures, in gold or some other material substance, the work of some unknown sculptor or graver: but at once the Intellectual-Principle which contemplates them becomes sense-perception; and there still remains the question how one of them comes to be Justice and another something else.

But the great argument is that if we are to allow that these objects of Intellection are in the strict sense outside the Intellectual-Principle, which, therefore, must see them as external, then inevitably it cannot possess the truth of them.

In all it looks upon, it sees falsely; for those objects must be the authentic things; yet it looks upon them without containing them and in such knowledge holds only their images; that is to say, not containing the authentic, adopting phantasms of the true, it holds the false; it never possesses reality. If it knows that it possesses the false, it must confess itself excluded.

ed from the truth; if it fails of this knowledge also, imagining itself to possess the truth which has eluded it, then the doubled falsity puts it the deeper into error.

It is thus, I suppose, that in sense-perception we have belief instead of truth; belief is our lief; we satisfy ourselves with something very different from the original which is the occasion of perception.

In fine, there would be on the hypothesis no truth in the Intellectual-Principle. But such an Intellectual-Principle would not be truth, nor truly an Intellectual-Principle. There would be no Intellectual-Principle at all [no Divine Mind]; yet elsewhere truth cannot be.

2. Thus we may not look for the Intellectual objects [the Ideas] outside of the Intellectual-Principle, treating them as impressions of reality upon it: we cannot strip it of truth and so make its objects unknowable and non-existent and in the end annul the Intellectual-Principle itself. We must provide for knowledge and for truth; we must secure reality; being must become knowable essentially and not merely in that knowledge of quality which could give us a mere image or vestige of the reality in lieu of possession, intimate association, absorption.

The only way to this is to leave nothing out side of the veritable Intellectual-Principle which thus has knowledge in the true knowing [that of identification with the object], cannot forget, need not go wandering in search. At once truth is there, this is the seat of the authentic Existents, it becomes living and intellectual: these are the essentials of that most lofty Principle; and, failing them, where is its worth, its grandeur?

Only thus [by this inherence of the Ideas] is it dispensed from demonstration and from acts of faith in the truth of its knowledge: it is its entire self, self-perspicuous: it knows a prior by recognising its own source; it knows a sequent to that prior by its self-identity; of the reality of this sequent, of the fact that it is present and has authentic existence, no outer entity can bring it surer conviction.

Thus veritable truth is not accordance with an external; it is self-accordance; it affirms and is nothing other than itself and is nothing other; it is at once existence and self-affirmation. What external, then, can call it to the question, and from what source of truth could the refutation be brought? Any counter affirmation [of truth] must fall into identity with the truth which first uttered itself; brought forward as new, it has to appear before the Principle which made the earlier statement and to show itself identical with that: for there is no finding anything truer than the true.

3. Thus we have here one identical Principle, the Intellect, which is the universe of authentic beings, the Truth: as such it is a great god or, better, not a god among gods but the Godhead entire. It is a god, a secondary god manifesting before there is any vision of that other, the Supreme which rests over all, enthroned in transcendence upon that splendid pediment, the Nature following close upon it.

The Supreme in its progress could never be borne forward upon some soulless vehicle nor even directly upon the soul: it will be heralded by some ineffable beauty: before the great King in his progress there comes first the minor train, then rank by rank the greater and more exalted, closer to the King the kinglier; next his own honoured company until, last among all these grandeurs, suddenly appears the Supreme Monarch himself, and all - unless indeed for those who have contented themselves with the spectacle before his coming and gone away- prostrate themselves and hail him.

In that royal progress the King is of another order from those that go before him, but the King in the Supreme is no ruler over externs; he holds that most just of governances, rooted in nature, the veritable kingship, for he is King of Truth, holding sway by all reason over a dense offspring his own, a host that shares his divinity, King over a king and over kings and even more justly called father of Gods.

[Interpolation: Zeus (Universal Soul) is in this a symbol of him, Zeus who is not content with the contemplation of his father (Kronos, divine Intellect) but looks to that father's father (to Ouranos, the Transcendent) as what may be called the divine energy working to the establishment of a real being.]

4. We have said that all must be brought back to a unity: this must be an authentic unity, not belonging to the order in which multiplicity is unified by participation in what is truly a One; we need a unity independent of participation, not a combination in which multiplicity holds an equal place: we have exhibited, also, the Intellectual Realm and the Intellectual-Principle as more closely a unity than the rest of things, so that there is nothing closer to The One. Yet even this is not The purely One.

This purely One, essentially a unity untouched by the multiple, this we now desire to penetrate if in any way we may.

Only by a leap can we reach to this One which is to be pure of all else, halting sharp in fear of slipping ever so little aside and impinging on the dual: for if we fail of the centre, we are in a duality which does not even include The authentic One but belongs on both sides, to the later order.

The One does not bear to be numbered in with anything else, with a one or a two or any such quantity; it refuses to take number because it is measure and not the measured; it is no peer of other entities to be found among them; for thus, it and they alike would be included in some container and this would be its prior, the prior it cannot have. Not even essential [ideal or abstract] number can belong to The One and certainly not the still later number applying to quantities; for essential number first appears as providing duration to the divine Intellection, while quantitative number is that [still later and lower] which furnishes the Quantity found in conjunction with other things or which provides for Quantity independent of things, if this is to be thought of as number at all. The Principle which in objects having quantitative number looks to the unity from which they spring is a copy [or lower phase] of the Principle which in the earlier order of number [in essential or ideal number] looks to the veritable One; and it attains its existence without in the least degree dissipating or shattering that prior unity: the dyad has come into being, but the precedent monad still stands; and this monad is quite distinct within the dyad from either of the two constituent unities, since there is nothing to make it one rather than the other: being neither, but simply that thing apart, it is present without being inherent.

But how are the two unities distinct and how is the dyad a unity, and is this unity the same as the unity by which each of the constituents is one thing?

Our answer must be that the unity is that of a participation in the primal unity with the participants remaining distinct from that in which they partake; the dyad, in so far as it is one thing, has this participation, but in a certain degree only; the unity of an army is not that of a single building; the dyad, as a thing of extension, is not strictly a unit either quantitatively or in manner of being.

Are we then to take it that the monads in the pentad and decad differ while the unity in the pentad is the same as that in the decad?

Yes, in the sense in which, big and little, ship is one with ship, army with army, city with city; otherwise, no. But certain difficulties in this matter will be dealt with later.

5. We return to our statement that The First remains intact even when other entities spring from it.

In the case of numbers, the unit remains intact while something else produces, and thus number arises in dependence on the unit: much more then does the unit, The One, remain intact in the principle which is before all

beings; especially since the entities produced in its likeness, while it thus remains intact, owe their existence to no other, but to its own all-sufficient power.

And just as there is, primarily or secondarily, some form or idea from the monad in each of the successive numbers- the later still participating, though unequally, in the unit- so the series of Beings following upon The First bear, each, some form or idea derived from that source. In Number the participation establishes Quantity; in the realm of Being, the trace of The One establishes reality: existence is a trace of The One- our word for entity may probably be connected with that for unity.

What we know as Being, the first sequent upon The One, advanced a little outward, so to speak, then chose to go no further, turned inward again and comes to rest and is now the reality and hearth [ousia and hestia] of the universe. Pressing [with the rough breathing] on the word for Being [on] we have the word "hen" [one], an indication that in our very form of speech we tell, as far as may be, that Being [the weaker] is that which proceeds from [the stronger] The One. Thus both the thing that comes to be and Being itself are carriers of a copy, since they are outflows from the power of The primal One: this power sees and in its emotion tries to represent what it sees and breaks into speech "On"; "cinai"; "ousia," "hestia" [Existent: Existence: Essence: Hestia or Hearth], sounds which labour to express the essential nature of the universe produced by the travail of the utterer and so to represent, as far as sounds may, the origin of reality.

6. All this, however, we may leave to individual judgement: to proceed:

This produced reality is an Ideal form- for certainly nothing springing from the Supreme can be less- and it is not a particular form but the form of all, beside which there is no other; it follows that The First must be without form, and, if without form, then it is no Being; Being must have some definition and therefore be limited; but the First cannot be thought of as having definition and limit, for thus it would be not the Source but the particular item indicated by the definition assigned to it. If all things belong to the produced, which of them can be thought of as the Supreme? Not included among them, this can be described only as transcending them: but they are Being and the Beings; it therefore transcends Being.

Note that the phrase transcending Being assigns no character, makes no assertion, allots no name, carries only the denial of particular being; and in this there is no attempt to circumscribe it: to seek to throw a line about that illimitable Nature would be folly, and anyone thinking to do so cuts himself

off from any slightest and most momentary approach to its least vestige.

As one wishing to contemplate the Intellectual Nature will lay aside all the representations of sense and so may see what transcends the sense-realm, in the same way one wishing to contemplate what transcends the Intellectual attains by putting away all that is of the intellect, taught by the intellect, no doubt, that the Transcendent exists but never seeking to define it.

Its definition, in fact, could be only "the indefinable": what is not a thing is not some definite thing. We are in agony for a true expression; we are talking of the untellable; we name, only to indicate for our own use as best we may. And this name, The One, contains really no more than the negation of plurality: under the same pressure the Pythagoreans found their indication in the symbol "Apollo" [a= not; pollon= of many] with its repudiation of the multiple. If we are led to think positively of The One, name and thing, there would be more truth in silence: the designation, a mere aid to enquiry, was never intended for more than a preliminary affirmation of absolute simplicity to be followed by the rejection of even that statement: it was the best that offered, but remains inadequate to express the Nature indicated. For this is a principle not to be conveyed by any sound; it cannot be known on any hearing but, if at all, by vision; and to hope in that vision to see a form is to fail of even that.

7. Consider the act of ocular vision:

There are two elements here; there is the form perceptible to the sense and there is the medium by which the eye sees that form. This medium is itself perceptible to the eye, distinct from the form to be seen, but the cause of the seeing; it is perceived at the one stroke in that form and on it and, hence, is not distinguished from it, the eye being held entirely by the illuminated object. When on the contrary this medium presents itself alone it is seen directly - though even then actual sight demands some solid base; there must be something besides the medium which, unless embracing some object, eludes perception; thus the light inherent to the sun would not be perceived but for the solidity of the mass. If it is objected that the sun is light entire, this would only be a proof of our assertion: no other visible form will contain light which must, then, have no other property than that of visibility, and in fact all other visible objects are something more than light alone.

So it is with the act of vision in the Intellectual Principle.

This vision sees, by another light, the objects illuminated by the First Principle: setting itself among them, it sees veritably; declining towards the

lower Nature, that upon which the light from above rests, it has less of that vision. Passing over the visible and looking to the medium by which it sees, then it holds the Light and the source of Light.

But since the Intellectual-Principle is not to see this light as something external we return to our analogy; the eye is not wholly dependent upon an outside and alien light; there is an earlier light within itself, a more brilliant, which it sees sometimes in a momentary flash. At night in the darkness a gleam leaps from within the eye: or again we make no effort to see anything; the eyelids close; yet a light flashes before us; or we rub the eye and it sees the light it contains. This is sight without the act, but it is the truest seeing, for it sees light whereas its other objects were the lit not the light.

It is certainly thus that the Intellectual-Principle, hiding itself from all the outer, withdrawing to the inmost, seeing nothing, must have its vision- not of some other light in some other thing but of the light within itself, unmingled, pure, suddenly gleaming before it;

8. So that we are left wondering whence it came, from within or without; and when it has gone, we say, "It was here. Yet no; it was beyond!" But we ought not to question whence; there is no whence, no coming or going in place; now it is seen and now not seen. We must not run after it, but fit ourselves for the vision and then wait tranquilly for its appearance, as the eye waits on the rising of the sun, which in its own time appears above the horizon- out of the ocean, as the poets say- and gives itself to our sight.

This Principle, of which the sun is an image, where has it its dawning, what horizon does it surmount to appear?

It stands immediately above the contemplating Intellect which has held itself at rest towards the vision, looking to nothing else than the good and beautiful, setting its entire being to that in a perfect surrender, and now tranquilly filled with power and taking a new beauty to itself, gleaming in the light of that presence.

This advent, still, is not by expectation: it is a coming without approach; the vision is not of something that must enter but of something present before all else, before the Intellect itself made any movement. Yet it is the Intellect that must move, to come and to go- going because it has not known where it should stay and where that presence stays, the nowhere contained.

And if the Intellect, too, could hold itself in that nowhere - not that it is ever in place; it too is uncontained, utterly unplaced - it would remain for ever in the vision of its prior, or, indeed, not in vision but in identity, all

duality annulled. But it is Intellect [having a sphere of its own] and, when it is to see, it must see by that in it which is not Intellect [by its divinest power].

No doubt it is wonderful that The First should thus be present without any coming, and that, while it is nowhere, nowhere is it not; but wonderful though this be in itself, the contrary would be more wonderful to those who know. Of course neither this contrary nor the wonder at it can be entertained. But we must explain:

9. Everything brought into being under some principle not itself is contained either within its maker or, if there is any intermediate, within that: having a prior essential to its being, it needs that prior always, otherwise it would not be contained at all. It is the order of nature: The last in the immediately preceding lasts, things of the order of the Firsts within their prior-firsts, and so thing within thing up to the very pinnacle of source.

That Source, having no prior, cannot be contained: uncontained by any of those other forms of being, each held within the series of priors, it is orb'd round all, but so as not to be pointed off to hold them part for part; it possesses but is not possessed. Holding all - though itself nowhere held - it is omnipresent, for where its presence failed something would elude its hold. At the same time, in the sense that it is nowhere held, it is not present: thus it is both present and not present; not present as not being circumscribed by anything; yet, as being utterly unattached, not inhibited from presence at any point. That inhibition would mean that the First was determined by some other being; the later series, then, would be without part in the Supreme; God has His limit and is no longer self-governed but mastered by inferiors.

While the contained must be where its container is, what is uncontained by place is not debarred from any: for, imagine a place where it is not and evidently some other place retains it; at once it is contained and there is an end of its placelessness.

But if the "nowhere" is to stand and the ascription of a "where," implying station in the extern, is to fall, then nothing can be left void; and at once - nothing void, yet no point containing - God is sovereignly present through all. We cannot think of something of God here and something else there, nor of all God gathered at some one spot: there is an instantaneous presence everywhere, nothing containing and nothing left void, everything therefore fully held by the divine.

Consider our universe. There is none before it and therefore it is not, itself, in a universe or in any place - what place was there before the uni-

verse came to be?- its linked members form and occupy the whole. But Soul is not in the universe, on the contrary the universe is in the Soul; bodily substance is not a place to the Soul; Soul is contained in Intellectual-Principle and is the container of body. The Intellectual-Principle in turn is contained in something else; but that prior principle has nothing in which to be: the First is therefore in nothing, and, therefore, nowhere. But all the rest must be somewhere; and where but in the First?

This can mean only that the First is neither remote from things nor directly within them; there is nothing containing it; it contains all. It is The Good to the universe if only in this way, that towards it all things have their being, all dependent upon it, each in its mode, so that thing rises above thing in goodness according to its fuller possession of authentic being.

10. Still, do not, I urge you, look for The Good through any of these other things; if you do, you will see not itself but its trace: you must form the idea of that which is to be grasped cleanly standing to itself not in any combination, the unheld in which all have hold: for no other is such, yet one such there must be.

Now it is clear that we cannot possess ourselves of the power of this principle in its concentrated fulness: so to do one must be identical with it: but some partial attainment is within our reach.

You who make the venture will throw forward all your being but you will never tell it entire- for that, you must yourself be the divine Intellect in Act- and at your utmost success it will still pass from you or, rather, you from it. In ordinary vision you may think to see the object entire: in this intellective act, all, less or more, that you can take to mind you may set down as The Good.

It is The Good since, being a power [being effective outwardly], it is the cause of the intelligent and intellective life as of life and intellect: for these grow from it as from the source of essence and of existence, the Source as being One, simplex and first because before it was nothing. All derives from this: it is the origin of the primal movement which it does not possess and of the repose which is but its absence of need; for neither rest nor movement can belong to that which has no place in which either could occur; centre, object, ground, all are alike unknown to it, for it is before all. Yet its Being is not limited; what is there to set bounds to it? Nor, on the other hand, is it infinite in the sense of magnitude; what place can there be to which it must extend, or why should there be movement where there is no lacking? All its infinitude resides in its power: it does not change and will

not fail; and in it all that is unfailing finds duration.

11. It is infinite also by right of being a pure unity with nothing towards which to direct any partial content. Absolutely One, it has never known measure and stands outside of number, and so is under no limit either in regard to any extern or within itself; for any such determination would bring something of the dual into it. And having no constituent parts it accepts no pattern, forms no shape.

Reason recognising it as such a nature, you may not hope to see it with mortal eyes, nor in any way that would be imagined by those who make sense the test of reality and so annul the supremely real. For what passes for the most truly existent is most truly non-existent - the thing of extension least real of all- while this unseen First is the source and principle of Being and sovereign over Reality.

You must turn appearances about or you will be left void of God. You will be like those at the festivals who in their gluttony cram themselves with things which none going to the gods may touch; they hold these goods to be more real than the vision of the God who is to be honoured and they go away having had no share in the sanctities of the shrine.

In these celebrations of which we speak, the unseen god leaves those in doubt of his existence who think nothing patent but what may be known to the flesh: it happens as if a man slept a life through and took the dream world in perfect trust; wake him, and he would refuse belief to the report of his open eyes and settle down to sleep again.

12. Knowing demands the organ fitted to the object; eyes for one kind, ears for another: similarly some things, we must believe, are to be known by the Intellectual-Principle in us. We must not confuse intellection with hearing or seeing; this would be trying to look with the ears or denying sound because it is not seen. Certain people, we must keep in mind, have forgotten that to which, from the beginning onwards, their longing and effort are pointed: for all that exists desires and aspires towards the Supreme by a compulsion of nature, as if all had received the oracle that without it they cannot be.

The perception of Beauty and the awe and the stirring of passion towards it are for those already in some degree knowing and awakened: but the Good, as possessed long since and setting up a natural tendency, is inherently present to even those asleep and brings them no wonder when some day they see it, since it is no occasional reminiscence but is always with them though in their drowse they are not aware of it: the love of Beauty on

the contrary sets up pain when it appears, for those that have seen it must pursue. This love of Beauty then is later than the love of Good and comes with a more sophisticated understanding; hence we know that Beauty is a secondary: the more primal appetite, not patent to sense, our movement towards our good, gives witness that The Good is the earlier, the prior.

Again; all that have possessed themselves of The Good feel it sufficient: they have attained the end: but Beauty not all have known and those that have judge it to exist for itself and not for them, as in the charm of this world the beauty belongs only to its possessor.

Then, too, it is thought enough to appear loveable whether one is so or not: but no one wants his Good in semblance only. All are seeking The First as something ranking before aught else, but they struggle venomously for beauty as something secondary like themselves: thus some minor personage may perhaps challenge equal honour with the King's right-hand man on pretext of similar dependence, forgetting that, while both owe their standing to the monarch, the other holds the higher rank.

The source of the error is that while both The Good and The Beautiful participate in the common source, The One precedes both; and that, in the Supreme also, The Good has no need of The Beautiful, while the Beautiful does need The Good.

The Good is gentle and friendly and tender, and we have it present when we but will. Beauty is all violence and stupefaction; its pleasure is spoiled with pain, and it even draws the thoughtless away from The Good as some attraction will lure the child from the father's side: these things tell of youth. The Good is the older - not in time but by degree of reality- and it has the higher and earlier power, all power in fact, for the sequent holds only a power subordinate and delegated of which the prior remains sovereign.

Not that God has any need of His derivatives: He ignores all that produced realm, never necessary to Him, and remains identically what He was before He brought it into being. So too, had the secondary never existed, He would have been unconcerned, exactly as He would not have grudged existence to any other universe that might spring into being from Him, were any such possible; of course no other such could be since there is nothing that has not existence once the All exists.

But God never was the All; that would make Him dependent upon the universe: transcending all, He was able at once to make all things and to leave them to their own being, He above.

13. The Supreme, as the Absolute Good and not merely a good being or

thing, can contain nothing, since there is nothing that could be its good.

Anything it could contain must be either good to it or not good; but in the supremely and primally Good there can be nothing not good; nor can the Absolute Good be a container to the Good: containing, then, neither the good nor the not good it contains nothing and, containing nothing, it is alone: it is void of all but itself.

If the rest of being either is good- without being the absolute good - or is not good, while on the other hand the Supreme contains neither what is good nor what is not good, then, containing nothing, it is The Good by that very absence of content.

Thus we rob it of its very being as The Absolute Good if we ascribe anything to it, existence or intellect or goodness. The only way is to make every denial and no assertion, to feign no quality or content there but to permit only the "It is" in which we pretend to no affirmation of non-existent attribute: there is an ignorant praise which, missing the true description, drags in qualities beneath the real worth and so abases; philosophy must guard against attaching to the Supreme what is later and lower: moving above all that order, it is the cause and source of all these, and is none of them.

For, once more, the nature of the Good is not such as to make it all things or a thing among all: that would range it under the same classification with them all and it would differ, thus, only by its individual quality, some specialty, some addition. At once it becomes not a unity but a duality; there is one common element not good and another element that is good; but a combination so made up of good and not good cannot be the purely good, the primarily good; the primarily good must be that principle in which the better element has more effectively participated and so attained its goodness. Any good thing has become so by communion; but that in which it has communion is not a thing among the things of the all; therefore the Good is not a thing of the All.

Since there is this Good in any good thing- the specific difference by which the combination becomes good- it must enter from elsewhere than the world of things: that source must be a Good absolute and isolated.

Thus is revealed to us the Primarily existent, the Good, above all that has being, good unalloyed, containing nothing in itself, utterly unmingling, all-transcending, cause of all.

Certainly neither Being nor Beauty springs from evil or from the neutral; the maker, as the more consummate, must surpass the made.

SIXTH TRACTATE

EIGHTH TRACTATE

ON THE INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

1. It is a principle with us that one who has attained to the vision of the Intellectual Beauty and grasped the beauty of the Authentic Intellect will be able also to come to understand the Father and Transcendent of that Divine Being. It concerns us, then, to try to see and say, for ourselves and as far as such matters may be told, how the Beauty of the divine Intellect and of the Intellectual Kosmos may be revealed to contemplation.

Let us go to the realm of magnitudes: Suppose two blocks of stone lying

side by side: one is unpatterned, quite untouched by art; the other has been minutely wrought by the craftsman's hands into some statue of god or man, a Grace or a Muse, or if a human being, not a portrait but a creation in which the sculptor's art has concentrated all loveliness.

Now it must be seen that the stone thus brought under the artist's hand to the beauty of form is beautiful not as stone- for so the crude block would be as pleasant- but in virtue of the form or idea introduced by the art. This form is not in the material; it is in the designer before ever it enters the stone; and the artificer holds it not by his equipment of eyes and hands but by his participation in his art. The beauty, therefore, exists in a far higher state in the art; for it does not come over integrally into the work; that original beauty is not transferred; what comes over is a derivative and a minor: and even that shows itself upon the statue not integrally and with entire realization of intention but only in so far as it has subdued the resistance of the material.

Art, then, creating in the image of its own nature and content, and working by the Idea or Reason-Principle of the beautiful object it is to produce, must itself be beautiful in a far higher and purer degree since it is the seat and source of that beauty, indwelling in the art, which must naturally be more complete than any comeliness of the external. In the degree in which the beauty is diffused by entering into matter, it is so much the weaker than that concentrated in unity; everything that reaches outwards is the less for it, strength less strong, heat less hot, every power less potent, and so beauty less beautiful.

Then again every prime cause must be, within itself, more powerful than its effect can be: the musical does not derive from an unmusical source but from music; and so the art exhibited in the material work derives from an art yet higher.

Still the arts are not to be slighted on the ground that they create by imitation of natural objects; for, to begin with, these natural objects are themselves imitations; then, we must recognise that they give no bare reproduction of the thing seen but go back to the Ideas from which Nature itself derives, and, furthermore, that much of their work is all their own; they are holders of beauty and add where nature is lacking. Thus Pheidias wrought the Zeus upon no model among things of sense but by apprehending what form Zeus must take if he chose to become manifest to sight.

2. But let us leave the arts and consider those works produced by Nature and admitted to be naturally beautiful which the creations of art are charged

with imitating, all reasoning life and unreasoning things alike, but especially the consummate among them, where the moulder and maker has subdued the material and given the form he desired. Now what is the beauty here? It has nothing to do with the blood or the menstrual process: either there is also a colour and form apart from all this, or there is nothing unless sheer ugliness or a bare recipient, as it were the mere Matter of beauty.

Whence shone forth the beauty of Helen, battle-sought; or of all those women like in loveliness to Aphrodite; or of Aphrodite herself; or of any human being that has been perfect in beauty; or of any of these gods manifest to sight, or unseen but carrying what would be beauty if we saw?

In all these is it not the Idea, something of that realm but communicated to the produced from within the producer just as in works of art, we held, it is communicated from the arts to their creations? Now we can surely not believe that, while the made thing and the Idea thus impressed upon Matter are beautiful, yet the Idea not so alloyed but resting still with the creator - the Idea primal, immaterial, firmly a unity- is not Beauty.

If material extension were in itself the ground of beauty, then the creating principle, being without extension, could not be beautiful: but beauty cannot be made to depend upon magnitude since, whether in a large object or a small, the one Idea equally moves and forms the mind by its inherent power. A further indication is that as long as the object remains outside us we know nothing of it; it affects us by entry; but only as an Idea can it enter through the eyes which are not of scope to take an extended mass: we are, no doubt, simultaneously possessed of the magnitude which, however, we take in not as mass but by an elaboration upon the presented form.

Then again the principle producing the beauty must be, itself, ugly, neutral or beautiful: ugly, it could not produce the opposite; neutral, why should its product be the one rather than the other? The Nature, then, which creates things so lovely must be itself of a far earlier beauty; we, undisciplined in discernment of the inward, knowing nothing of it, run after the outer, never understanding that it is the inner which stirs us; we are in the case of one who sees his own reflection but not realizing whence it comes goes in pursuit of it.

But that the thing we are pursuing is something different and that the beauty is not in the concrete object is manifest from the beauty there is in matters of study, in conduct and custom; briefly in soul or mind. And it is precisely here that the greater beauty lies, perceived whenever you look to the wisdom in a man and delight in it, not wasting attention on the face,

which may be hideous, but passing all appearance by and catching only at the inner comeliness, the truly personal; if you are still unmoved and cannot acknowledge beauty under such conditions, then looking to your own inner being you will find no beauty to delight you and it will be futile in that state to seek the greater vision, for you will be questing it through the ugly and impure.

This is why such matters are not spoken of to everyone; you, if you are conscious of beauty within, remember.

3. Thus there is in the Nature-Principle itself an Ideal archetype of the beauty that is found in material forms and, of that archetype again, the still more beautiful archetype in Soul, source of that in Nature. In the proficient soul this is brighter and of more advanced loveliness: adorning the soul and bringing to it a light from that greater light which is beauty primally, its immediate presence sets the soul reflecting upon the quality of this prior, the archetype which has no such entries, and is present nowhere but remains in itself alone, and thus is not even to be called a Reason-Principle but is the creative source of the very first Reason-Principle which is the Beauty to which Soul serves as Matter.

This prior, then, is the Intellectual-Principle, the veritable, abiding and not fluctuant since not taking intellectual quality from outside itself. By what image thus, can we represent it? We have nowhere to go but to what is less. Only from itself can we take an image of it; that is, there can be no representation of it, except in the sense that we represent gold by some portion of gold- purified, either actually or mentally, if it be impure- insisting at the same time that this is not the total thing-gold, but merely the particular gold of a particular parcel. In the same way we learn in this matter from the purified Intellect in ourselves or, if you like, from the Gods and the glory of the Intellect in them.

For assuredly all the Gods are august and beautiful in a beauty beyond our speech. And what makes them so? Intellect; and especially Intellect operating within them [the divine sun and stars] to visibility. It is not through the loveliness of their corporeal forms: even those that have body are not gods by that beauty; it is in virtue of Intellect that they, too, are gods, and as gods beautiful. They do not veer between wisdom and folly: in the immunity of Intellect unmoving and pure, they are wise always, all-knowing, taking cognisance not of the human but of their own being and of all that lies within the contemplation of Intellect. Those of them whose dwelling is in the heavens, are ever in this meditation - what task prevents

them?- and from afar they look, too, into that further heaven by a lifting of the head. The Gods belonging to that higher Heaven itself, they whose station is upon it and in it, see and know in virtue of their omnipresence to it. For all There is heaven; earth is heaven, and sea heaven; and animal and plant and man; all is the heavenly content of that heaven: and the Gods in it, despising neither men nor anything else that is there where all is of the heavenly order, traverse all that country and all space in peace.

4. To "live at ease" is There; and, to these divine beings, verity is mother and nurse, existence and sustenance; all that is not of process but of authentic being they see, and themselves in all: for all is transparent, nothing dark, nothing resistant; every being is lucid to every other, in breadth and depth; light runs through light. And each of them contains all within itself, and at the same time sees all in every other, so that everywhere there is all, and all is all and each all, and infinite the glory. Each of them is great; the small is great; the sun, There, is all the stars; and every star, again, is all the stars and sun. While some one manner of being is dominant in each, all are mirrored in every other.

Movement There is pure [as self-caused] for the moving principle is not a separate thing to complicate it as it speeds.

So, too, Repose is not troubled, for there is no admixture of the unstable; and the Beauty is all beauty since it is not merely resident [as an attribute or addition] in some beautiful object. Each There walks upon no alien soil; its place is its essential self; and, as each moves, so to speak, towards what is Above, it is attended by the very ground from which it starts: there is no distinguishing between the Being and the Place; all is Intellect, the Principle and the ground on which it stands, alike. Thus we might think that our visible sky [the ground or place of the stars], lit, as it is, produces the light which reaches us from it, though of course this is really produced by the stars [as it were, by the Principles of light alone, not also by the ground as the analogy would require].

In our realm all is part rising from part and nothing can be more than partial; but There each being is an eternal product of a whole and is at once a whole and an individual manifesting as part but, to the keen vision There, known for the whole it is.

The myth of Lynceus seeing into the very deeps of the earth tells us of those eyes in the divine. No weariness overtakes this vision, which yet brings no such satiety as would call for its ending; for there never was a void to be filled so that, with the fulness and the attainment of purpose, the

sense of sufficiency be induced: nor is there any such incongruity within the divine that one Being there could be repulsive to another: and of course all There are unchangeable. This absence of satisfaction means only a satisfaction leading to no distaste for that which produces it; to see is to look the more, since for them to continue in the contemplation of an infinite self and of infinite objects is but to acquiesce in the bidding of their nature.

Life, pure, is never a burden; how then could there be weariness There where the living is most noble? That very life is wisdom, not a wisdom built up by reasonings but complete from the beginning, suffering no lack which could set it enquiring, a wisdom primal, unborrowed, not something added to the Being, but its very essence. No wisdom, thus, is greater; this is the authentic knowing, assessor to the divine Intellect as projected into manifestation simultaneously with it; thus, in the symbolic saying, Justice is assessor to Zeus.

[Perfect wisdom] for all the Principles of this order, dwelling There, are as it were visible images protected from themselves, so that all becomes an object of contemplation to contemplators immeasurably blessed. The greatness and power of the wisdom There we may know from this, that is embraces all the real Beings, and has made all, and all follow it, and yet that it is itself those beings, which sprang into being with it, so that all is one, and the essence There is wisdom. If we have failed to understand, it is that we have thought of knowledge as a mass of theorems and an accumulation of propositions, though that is false even for our sciences of the sense-realm. But in case this should be questioned, we may leave our own sciences for the present, and deal with the knowing in the Supreme at which Plato glances where he speaks of "that knowledge which is not a stranger in something strange to it"- though in what sense, he leaves us to examine and declare, if we boast ourselves worthy of the discussion. This is probably our best starting-point.

5. All that comes to be, work of nature or of craft, some wisdom has made: everywhere a wisdom presides at a making.

No doubt the wisdom of the artist may be the guide of the work; it is sufficient explanation of the wisdom exhibited in the arts; but the artist himself goes back, after all, to that wisdom in Nature which is embodied in himself; and this is not a wisdom built up of theorems but one totality, not a wisdom consisting of manifold detail co-ordinated into a unity but rather a unity working out into detail.

Now, if we could think of this as the primal wisdom, we need look no

further, since, at that, we have discovered a principle which is neither a derivative nor a "stranger in something strange to it." But if we are told that, while this Reason-Principle is in Nature, yet Nature itself is its source, we ask how Nature came to possess it; and, if Nature derived it from some other source, we ask what that other source may be; if, on the contrary, the principle is self-sprung, we need look no further: but if we are referred to the Intellectual-Principle we must make clear whether the Intellectual-Principle engendered the wisdom: if we learn that it did, we ask whence: if from itself, then inevitably, it is itself Wisdom.

The true Wisdom, then [found to be identical with the Intellectual-Principle] is Real Being; and Real Being is Wisdom; it is wisdom that gives value to Real Being; and Being is Real in virtue of its origin in wisdom. It follows that all forms of existence not possessing wisdom are, indeed, Beings in right of the wisdom which went to their forming but, as not in themselves possessing it, are not Real Beings.

We cannot therefore think that the divine Beings of that sphere, or the other supremely blessed There, need look to our apparatus of science: all of that realm, all is noble image, such images as we may conceive to lie within the soul of the wise - but There not as inscription but as authentic existence. The ancients had this in mind when they declared the Ideas to be Beings, Essentials.

6. Similarly, as it seems to me, the wise of Egypt- whether in precise knowledge or by a prompting of nature - indicated the truth where, in their effort towards philosophical statement, they left aside the writing-forms that take in the detail of words and sentences- those characters that represent sounds and convey the propositions of reasoning- and drew pictures instead, engraving in the temple- inscriptions a separate image for every separate item: thus they exhibited the mode in which the Supreme goes forth.

For each manifestation of knowledge and wisdom is a distinct image, an object in itself, an immediate unity, not as aggregate of discursive reasoning and detailed willing. Later from this wisdom in unity there appears, in another form of being, an image, already less compact, which announces the original in an outward stage and seeks the causes by which things are such that the wonder rises how a generated world can be so excellent.

For, one who knows must declare his wonder that this Wisdom, while not itself containing the causes by which Being exists and takes such excellence, yet imparts them to the entities produced in Being's realm. This

excellence whose necessity is scarcely or not at all manifest to search, exists, if we could but find it out, before all searching and reasoning.

What I say may be considered in one chief thing, and thence applied to all the particular entities:

7. Consider the universe: we are agreed that its existence and its nature come to it from beyond itself; are we, now, to imagine that its maker first thought it out in detail- the earth, and its necessary situation in the middle; water and, again, its position as lying upon the earth; all the other elements and objects up to the sky in due place and order; living beings with their appropriate forms as we know them, their inner organs and their outer limbs - and that having thus appointed every item beforehand, he then set about the execution?

Such designing was not even possible; how could the plan for a universe come to one that had never looked outward? Nor could he work on material gathered from elsewhere as our craftsmen do, using hands and tools; feet and hands are of the later order.

One way, only, remains: all things must exist in something else; of that prior- since there is no obstacle, all being continuous within the realm of reality- there has suddenly appeared a sign, an image, whether given forth directly or through the ministry of soul or of some phase of soul, matters nothing for the moment: thus the entire aggregate of existence springs from the divine world, in greater beauty There because There unmingled but mingled here.

From the beginning to end all is gripped by the Forms of the Intellectual Realm: Matter itself is held by the Ideas of the elements and to these Ideas are added other Ideas and others again, so that it is hard to work down to crude Matter beneath all that sheathing of Idea. Indeed since Matter itself is in its degree, an Idea - the lowest- all this universe is Idea and there is nothing that is not Idea as the archetype was. And all is made silently, since nothing had part in the making but Being and Idea further reason why creation went without toil. The Exemplar was the Idea of an All, and so an All must come into being.

Thus nothing stood in the way of the Idea, and even now it dominates, despite all the clash of things: the creation is not hindered on its way even now; it stands firm in virtue of being All. To me, moreover, it seems that if we ourselves were archetypes, Ideas, veritable Being, and the Idea with which we construct here were our veritable Essence, then our creative power too would toillessly effect its purpose: as man now stands, he does

not produce in his work a true image of himself: become man, he has ceased to be the All: ceasing to be man- we read- "he soars aloft and administers the Kosmos entire"; restored to the All he is maker of the All.

But- to our immediate purpose- it is possible to give a reason why the earth is set in the midst and why it is round and why the ecliptic runs precisely as it does, but, looking to the creating principle, we cannot say that because this was the way therefore things were so planned: we can say only that because the All is what it is, therefore there is a total of good; the causing principle, we might put it, reached the conclusion before all formal reasoning and not from any premises, not by sequence or plan but before either, since all of that order is later, all reason, demonstration, persuasion.

Since there is a Source, all the created must spring from it and in accordance with it; and we are rightly told not to go seeking the causes impelling a Source to produce, especially when this is the perfectly sufficient Source and identical with the Term: a Source which is Source and Term must be the All-Unity, complete in itself.

8. This then is Beauty primally: it is entire and omnipresent as an entirety; and therefore in none of its parts or members lacking in beauty; beautiful thus beyond denial. Certainly it cannot be anything [be, for example, Beauty] without being wholly that thing; it can be nothing which it is to possess partially or in which it utterly fails [and therefore it must entirely be Beauty entire].

If this principle were not beautiful, what other could be? Its prior does not deign to be beautiful; that which is the first to manifest itself - Form and object of vision to the intellect - cannot but be lovely to see. It is to indicate this that Plato, drawing on something well within our observation, represents the Creator as approving the work he has achieved: the intention is to make us feel the lovable beauty of the autotype and of the Divine Idea; for to admire a representation is to admire the original upon which it was made.

It is not surprising if we fail to recognise what is passing within us: lovers, and those in general that admire beauty here, do not stay to reflect that it is to be traced, as of course it must be, to the Beauty There. That the admiration of the Demiurge is to be referred to the Ideal Exemplar is deliberately made evident by the rest of the passage: "He admired; and determined to bring the work into still closer likeness with the Exemplar": he makes us feel the magnificent beauty of the Exemplar by telling us that the Beauty sprung from this world is, itself, a copy from That.

And indeed if the divine did not exist, the transcendently beautiful, in a

beauty beyond all thought, what could be lovelier than the things we see? Certainly no reproach can rightly be brought against this world save only that it is not That.

9. Let us, then, make a mental picture of our universe: each member shall remain what it is, distinctly apart; yet all is to form, as far as possible, a complete unity so that whatever comes into view shall show as if it were the surface of the orb over all, bringing immediately with it the vision, on the one plane, of the sun and of all the stars with earth and sea and all living things as if exhibited upon a transparent globe.

Bring this vision actually before your sight, so that there shall be in your mind the gleaming representation of a sphere, a picture holding sprung, themselves, of that universe and repose or some at rest, some in motion. Keep this sphere before you, and from it imagine another, a sphere stripped of magnitude and of spatial differences; cast out your inborn sense of Matter, taking care not merely to attenuate it: call on God, maker of the sphere whose image you now hold, and pray Him to enter. And may He come bringing His own Universe with all the Gods that dwell in it- He who is the one God and all the gods, where each is all, blending into a unity, distinct in powers but all one god in virtue of that one divine power of many facets.

More truly, this is the one God who is all the gods; for, in the coming to be of all those, this, the one, has suffered no diminishing. He and all have one existence while each again is distinct. It is distinction by state without interval: there is no outward form to set one here and another there and to prevent any from being an entire identity; yet there is no sharing of parts from one to another. Nor is each of those divine wholes a power in fragment, a power totalling to the sum of the measurable segments: the divine is one all-power, reaching out to infinity, powerful to infinity; and so great is God that his very members are infinities. What place can be named to which He does not reach?

Great, too, is this firmament of ours and all the powers constellated within it, but it would be greater still, unspeakably, but that there is inbound in it something of the petty power of body; no doubt the powers of fire and other bodily substances might themselves be thought very great, but in fact, it is through their failure in the true power that we see them burning, destroying, wearing things away, and slaving towards the production of life; they destroy because they are themselves in process of destruction, and they produce because they belong to the realm of the produced.

The power in that other world has merely Being and Beauty of Being. Beauty without Being could not be, nor Being voided of Beauty: abandoned of Beauty, Being loses something of its essence. Being is desirable because it is identical with Beauty; and Beauty is loved because it is Being. How then can we debate which is the cause of the other, where the nature is one? The very figment of Being needs some imposed image of Beauty to make it passable and even to ensure its existence; it exists to the degree in which it has taken some share in the beauty of Idea; and the more deeply it has drawn on this, the less imperfect it is, precisely because the nature which is essentially the beautiful has entered into it the more intimately.

10. This is why Zeus, although the oldest of the gods and their sovereign, advances first [in the Phaidros myth] towards that vision, followed by gods and demigods and such souls as are of strength to see. That Being appears before them from some unseen place and rising loftily over them pours its light upon all things, so that all gleams in its radiance; it upholds some beings, and they see; the lower are dazzled and turn away, unfit to gaze upon that sun, the trouble falling the more heavily on those most remote.

Of those looking upon that Being and its content, and able to see, all take something but not all the same vision always: intently gazing, one sees the fount and principle of Justice, another is filled with the sight of Moral Wisdom, the original of that quality as found, sometimes at least, among men, copied by them in their degree from the divine virtue which, covering all the expanse, so to speak, of the Intellectual Realm is seen, last attainment of all, by those who have known already many splendid visions.

The gods see, each singly and all as one. So, too, the souls; they see all There in right of being sprung, themselves, of that universe and therefore including all from beginning to end and having their existence There if only by that phase which belongs inherently to the Divine, though often too they are There entire, those of them that have not incurred separation.

This vision Zeus takes, and it is for such of us, also, as share his love and appropriate our part in the Beauty There, the final object of all seeing, the entire beauty upon all things; for all There sheds radiance, and floods those that have found their way thither so that they too become beautiful; thus it will often happen that men climbing heights where the soil has taken a yellow glow will themselves appear so, borrowing colour from the place on which they move. The colour flowering on that other height we speak of is Beauty; or rather all There is light and beauty, through and through, for the beauty is no mere bloom upon the surface.

To those that do not see entire, the immediate impression is alone taken into account; but those drunken with this wine, filled with the nectar, all their soul penetrated by this beauty, cannot remain mere gazers: no longer is there a spectator outside gazing on an outside spectacle; the clear-eyed hold the vision within themselves, though, for the most part, they have no idea that it is within but look towards it as to something beyond them and see it as an object of vision caught by a direction of the will.

All that one sees as a spectacle is still external; one must bring the vision within and see no longer in that mode of separation but as we know ourselves; thus a man filled with a god- possessed by Apollo or by one of the Muses- need no longer look outside for his vision of the divine being; it is but finding the strength to see divinity within.

11. Similarly any one, unable to see himself, but possessed by that God, has but to bring that divine- within before his consciousness and at once he sees an image of himself, himself lifted to a better beauty: now let him ignore that image, lovely though it is, and sink into a perfect self-identity, no such separation remaining; at once he forms a multiple unity with the God silently present; in the degree of his power and will, the two become one; should he turn back to the former duality, still he is pure and remains very near to the God; he has but to look again and the same presence is there.

This conversion brings gain: at the first stage, that of separation, a man is aware of self; but, retreating inwards, he becomes possessor of all; he puts sense away behind him in dread of the separated life and becomes one in the Divine; if he plans to see in separation, he sets himself outside.

The novice must hold himself constantly under some image of the Divine Being and seek in the light of a clear conception; knowing thus, in a deep conviction, whither he is going- into what a sublimity he penetrates- he must give himself forthwith to the inner and, radiant with the Divine Intellections [with which he is now one], be no longer the seer but, as that place has made him, the seen.

Still, we will be told, one cannot be in beauty and yet fail to see it. The very contrary: to see the divine as something external is to be outside of it; to become it is to be most truly in beauty: since sight deals with the external, there can here be no vision unless in the sense of identification with the object.

And this identification amounts to a self-knowing, a self-consciousness, guarded by the fear of losing the self in the desire of a too wide awareness.

It must be remembered that sensations of the ugly and evil impress us

more violently than those of what is agreeable and yet leave less knowledge as the residue of the shock: sickness makes the rougher mark, but health, tranquilly present, explains itself better; it takes the first place, it is the natural thing, it belongs to our being; illness is alien, unnatural and thus makes itself felt by its very incongruity, while the other conditions are native and we take no notice. Such being our nature, we are most completely aware of ourselves when we are most completely identified with the object of our knowledge.

This is why in that other sphere, when we are deepest in that knowledge by intellection, we are aware of none; we are expecting some impression on sense, which has nothing to report since it has seen nothing and never could in that order see anything. The unbelieving element is sense; it is the other, the Intellectual-Principle, that sees; and if this too doubted, it could not even credit its own existence, for it can never stand away and with bodily eyes apprehend itself as a visible object.

12. We have told how this vision is to be procured, whether by the mode of separation or in identity: now, seen in either way, what does it give to report?

The vision has been of God in travail of a beautiful offspring, God engendering a universe within himself in a painless labour and - rejoiced in what he has brought into being, proud of his children - keeping all closely by Him, for pleasure He has in his radiance and in theirs.

Of this offspring- all beautiful, but most beautiful those that have remained within- only one has become manifest without; from him [Zeus, sovereign over the visible universe] the youngest born, we may gather, as from some image, the greatness of the Father and of the Brothers that remain within the Father's house.

Still the manifested God cannot think that he has come forth in vain from the father; for through him another universe has arisen, beautiful as the image of beauty, and it could not be' lawful that Beauty and Being should fail of a beautiful image.

This second Kosmos at every point copies the archetype: it has life and being in copy, and has beauty as springing from that diviner world. In its character of image it holds, too, that divine perpetuity without which it would only at times be truly representative and sometimes fail like a construction of art; for every image whose existence lies in the nature of things must stand during the entire existence of the archetype.

Hence it is false to put an end to the visible sphere as long as the

Intellectual endures, or to found it upon a decision taken by its maker at some given moment.

That teaching shirks the penetration of such a making as is here involved: it fails to see that as long as the Supreme is radiant there can be no failing of its sequel but, that existing, all exists. And - since the necessity of conveying our meaning compels such terms - the Supreme has existed for ever and for ever will exist.

13. The God fettered [as in the Kronos Myth] to an unchanging identity leaves the ordering of this universe to his son (to Zeus), for it could not be in his character to neglect his rule within the divine sphere, and, as though sated with the Authentic-Beauty, seek a lordship too recent and too poor for his might. Ignoring this lower world, Kronos [Intellectual-Principle] claims for his own father [Ouranoo, the Absolute, or One] with all the upward-tending between them: and he counts all that tends to the inferior, beginning from his son [Zeus, the All-Soul], as ranking beneath him. Thus he holds a mid position determined on the one side by the differentiation implied in the severance from the very highest and, on the other, by that which keeps him apart from the link between himself and the lower: he stands between a greater father and an inferior son. But since that father is too lofty to be thought of under the name of Beauty, the second God remains the primally beautiful.

Soul also has beauty, but is less beautiful than Intellect as being its image and therefore, though beautiful in nature, taking increase of beauty by looking to that original. Since then the All-Soul- to use the more familiar term- since Aphrodite herself is so beautiful, what name can we give to that other? If Soul is so lovely in its own right, of what quality must that prior be? And since its being is derived, what must that power be from which the Soul takes the double beauty, the borrowed and the inherent?

We ourselves possess beauty when we are true to our own being; our ugliness is in going over to another order; our self-knowledge, that is to say, is our beauty; in self-ignorance we are ugly.

Thus beauty is of the Divine and comes Thence only.

Do these considerations suffice to a clear understanding of the Intellectual Sphere, or must we make yet another attempt by another road?

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